

WHEN THE MOON SPLIT

(A Biography of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ)

Compiled by
Safiur-Rahman Mubarakpuri

Edited and Translated by
Tabassum Siraj
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DARUSSALAM
Publishers & Distributors
Riyadh, Houston, Lahore

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of Allâh
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

And We have sent you (O Muhammad ﷺ)
not but as a mercy for the *'Âlamîn*
(mankind, jinn and all that exists).

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Publishers Note

The biography of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is a very noble and exalted subject. The heart of every Muslim is filled with the love of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Love and respect of a person depends on the benefits he gets from him. As the Prophet is the greatest benefactor of humanity, every Muslim has deepest love for him. Allâh the All-Mighty has described and explained the status of Muhammad ﷺ in the Qur'ân:

﴿ قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ﴾ [آل عمران : ٣١]

"Say (O Muhammad ﷺ to mankind): 'If you (really) love Allâh then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*), Allâh will love you...' " (3:31)

To highlight the exalted status of the Prophet ﷺ and to bring in light the efforts made by him in the propagation of the Divine Message — the religion in truth, and the hardships he endured in the preaching of this religion, especially at that time which was perhaps most unsuitable socially and intellectually for the acceptance of the message of Truth, Safi-ur-Rahman Mubarakpuri has presented this book.

The facts about the life of the Prophet ﷺ have been collected from the Qur'ân, authentic *Ahadith* and other authoritative and reliable sources so as to compile the book on factual basis without any distortions. The translation and its editing has been done by professional people having an experience of presenting many books on the religious topics.

The name of the book has been chosen from the great miracle of the splitting of the moon into half. Allâh has described this miracle in the Qur'ân saying:

﴿ ٱقْتَرَبَتِ ٱلسَّاعَةُ وَٱنشَقَّ ٱلْقَمَرُ ﴾ [القمر : ١]

"The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has been cleft asunder." (54:1)

The following *Hadith* is also about the same miracle:

> "Narrated Anas ﷺ: The people of Makkah asked the Prophet ﷺ to show them a sign (miracle). So he showed them (the miracle) of the cleaving of the moon." (*Sahih Al-Bukhâri*)

We hope that all the Muslims who read this book will find in them a new zeal towards their religion and towards the performance of those religious, moral and social duties which the religion of truth Islam demands from them. The demand of Islam is totally for the benefit of the mankind, individually as well as collectively, not only for this world but also to be beneficial in the life of the Hereafter.

The non-Muslim readers are expected to acquire a true understanding of the religion of Islam and the last Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as they have been often misguided by the false pretensions supplied to them by the foreign sources opposing Islam.

I pray to Allâh that this book may prove beneficial to all the readers, and they get full benefits so as to achieve the successes of this world and the world Hereafter.

Abdul-Malik Mujahid
General Manager
Darussalam

From the Author

The biography of the Prophet is a very noble and exalted subject. It teaches Muslims about the rise of Islam, and how the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was chosen by Allâh to receive divine revelation. Muslims also learn of the hardships the Prophet and his Companions faced, and how they eventually succeeded with Allâh's help.

Muslims who study the Prophet's life, learn much more from it than the story of one man's life. They discover how Allâh prepared the Prophet for his mission; how Allâh revealed the Qur'ân to the Prophet; how the teachings of Islam fortified the hearts of early Muslims; how a small band of faithful Muslims defeated Arabia's fiercest warriors; and how the truth of Islam triumphed over falsehood and its many devotees.

The Prophet's biography thus helps Muslims better understand their religion. For this reason, scholars from the time of the Prophet to the present have been very careful about determining the authenticity of the sources of the Prophet's biography. However, not all biographers have made use of the available research. Many have written distorted accounts of the Prophet's life, adding whatever appealed to them regardless of its accuracy or authenticity. Consequently, there are many written accounts of the Prophet's life that contain information contrary to the teachings of Islam.

In the light of these problems, many people asked me to compile an authentic biography of the Prophet based on authentic sources. I accepted this challenging task and began piecing together this biography from the following sources: the Qur'ân, authoritative explications of the Qur'ân, authentic sayings of the Prophet and authoritative biographies.

I pray to Allâh that Muslims will benefit from this work, and that it will be a source of blessings in both worlds.

Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri
Shawwal 12, 1415 A.H.

Preface

'*When the Moon split*,' is based on Arabic sources and was originally written in Urdu. The translators were thus confronted with the arduous task of working with three different languages involving different narrative techniques.

Rendering '*When the Moon Split*' into English entailed more than a simple translation of the text. It required the adaptation of a text with its unique cultural framework to the standard narrative conventions of another culture. At the same time, the translators were required to adhere to the outline of standard Arabic biographies of the Prophet.

Limited by the narrative boundaries that define such biographies, our modest goal was to produce a text accessible to those who are somewhat familiar with the life of the Prophet. Nevertheless, many readers may still find certain concepts, terms or even certain events difficult to comprehend. We recommend using a good reference book on Islam or Islamic history to clarify passages that appear obscure.

Those who have read other biographies of the Prophet, may find '*When the Moon split*' unique in that it is a straightforward account of the Prophet's life, based on what Muslim scholars and historians regard as the most accurate and reliable sources. No attempt has been made to "modernize" the Prophet by emphasizing certain of his qualities that are currently fashionable, nor by omitting or justifying anything that would be considered "politically incorrect" by some contemporary readers.

Unfortunately, many Muslims have written about the Prophet's life in English as apologists, hoping to appeal to a somewhat skeptical audience. Professor Mubarakpuri wisely resists offering such justifications and explanations. The Prophet, after all, transcends time and culture. It is not necessary to recreate him again and again for different audiences and different times because his greatness is apparent in any context. The truth of his message and mission will endure, and the following pages are a testimony to this fact.

Michael Richardson & Tabassum Siraj
Jeddah 1998

The Prophet Muhammad's Ancestors

Lineage being an important consideration in Arab society, the Prophet's family tree was well-documented. He was born into a family that traced its ancestry back to the Prophet Ibraheem (Abraham) through Isma'eel (Ishmael).

The Prophet's lineage is as follows: Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Abdul Muttalib bin Hashim bin Abdu Munaf bin Qusayy bin Kilab bin Murrah bin Ka'b bin Luayy bin Ghalib bin Fihr bin Malik bin Nadir bin Kinana bin Khuzaymah bin Mudrika bin Ilyas bin Mudhr bin Nizar bin Ma'd bin Adnan.

While all scholars agree that Adnan was the descendant of Isma'eel ﷺ, there is much dispute about the number of generations between the two and the names of each descendant.

The Prophet's mother was Amina, the daughter of Wahb bin Abdu Munaf bin Zuhra bin Kilab. *Kilab* also appears as a paternal ancestor of the Prophet. It is said that his real name was Urwa or Hakim, but he was known as *Kilab* because of his passion for hunting with dogs (called "*Kilab*" in Arabic).

The Prophet's tribe

The Prophet ﷺ belonged to the tribe known as Quraysh, the most respected tribe in Arabia. "Quraysh" was, in fact, the surname of Fihr bin Malik or Nadir bin Kinana. Later, his progeny came to be known by the name Quraysh.

The Quraysh enjoyed a position of honor in the peninsula. One member of this tribe, Qusayy, played an especially vital role in establishing the greatness of this tribe. His real name was Zayd, and upon his father's death, his mother settled among the Azra tribe near Syria. It was there that Qusayy was brought up. He returned to Makkah during his youth, and assumed the trusteeship of the *Ka'bah* [1]. Because of his prestigious position, he was at

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[1]The *Ka'bah* was the first house of worship built for mankind. It was built by Adam, and later rebuilt by the Prophets Ibraheem and Isma'eel.

liberty to open the door of the *Ka'bah* whenever and for whomsoever he liked. He established the system of playing host to the pilgrims who journeyed to Makkah, preparing large quantities of food for them, and serving beverages made from honey, dates or raisins.

Qusayy also built a house north of the *Ka'bah*, which he named Dar Al-Nadwah, and in it were held many of the tribe's official activities. Dar Al-Nadwah housed the tribal parliament, and marriages were also performed on its premises.

Qusayy was entrusted with the standard and bow of the Quraysh. No one but he had the right to fasten on the battle standard. Gracious and wise, he was obeyed unhesitatingly by his tribesmen who, under his leadership, settled in Makkah, and grew from a scattered band of people into a homogeneous community.

Lineage

The Prophet's lineage is called Hashmi after his great grandfather, Hashim. Hashim assumed the position of host to the pilgrims, a privilege which, after him, was transferred to his brother, Muttalib. After Muttalib's death, the progeny of Hashim reclaimed this privilege and retained it until the advent of Islam.

Hashim was very well-respected and earned the title Sayyed Bathaa (chief of Bathaa). He was called Hashim (one who mashes something) because he used to mash pieces of bread in meat and soup and distribute it for others to eat.

The Quraysh were merchants by profession, and Hashim arranged trade journeys for them to Yemen each winter and to Syria each summer. He obtained security for them from the authorities in both these countries. In Surah Quraysh (a "chapter" of the Qur'ân is called a "*Surah*"), Allâh reminds the Quraysh of their debt to Him for these important trade expeditions.

Hashim once passed by Yathrib (later known as Madinah) en route to Syria, and there he married Salma bint Amr, a lady from the

tribe Banu Adiy bin Najjar. He halted there for a few days and then left for Syria. He passed away in Gaza, a famous city in Palestine. At the time of his departure, Salma was pregnant. She gave birth to a son whose hair had white streaks. She therefore named him Shayba, which means "one with gray hair." None of Hashim's relatives in Makkah knew about the birth of Shayba. Eight years later, however, Muttalib found out about his dead brother's son and decided to bring Shayba to Makkah. When he entered Makkah with Shayba, the people thought the young boy was Muttalib's slave and referred to Shayba as Abdul Muttalib, which means 'Muttalib's slave". Thus, Shayba became known as Abdul Muttalib.

Abdul Muttalib grew up to be a very handsome man and became a leading figure of the Quraysh tribe. He was the chieftain of the Quraysh and oversaw the tribe's trade caravans. Famous for his generosity, he was called "the Generous." He gave his leftovers to the needy, and even to animals and birds. For this reason, he was described as the "feeder of men on earth and of beasts and birds on the mountaintops."

Abdul Muttalib also had the honor of rediscovering the sacred well of *Zamzam*. This well had gushed forth when the infant Isma'eel kicked at the dry sand while his mother, Hajar (Hagar), searched for water. The location of the well had been forgotten ever since the tribe of Jurhum covered it when they were being exiled from Makkah. One night Abdul Muttalib had a dream in which he was shown where to dig the well. When he started digging next to the *Ka'bah*, the water of *Zamzam* began to flow again.

It was also during Abdul Muttalib's time that the *Ka'bah* was attacked by the Abyssinian conqueror Abraha and his men, whom the Qur'ân refers to as the "Companions of the Elephant." Abraha advanced with an army of sixty thousand men, intent on destroying the *Ka'bah*. By destroying the *Ka'bah*, he hoped to divert Arab pilgrims to his church in Yemen.

Abraha reached the valley of Muhassir, between Muzdalifah and Mina, ready to invade Makkah. As he advanced with his elephant, the beast that had terrified all of Makkah suddenly refused to move. As for the sixty thousand soldiers, Allâh, in defense of His Sacred House of worship, sent flocks of birds to pelt the invaders with stones. The soldiers were repulsed, and they lay felled by the stones, their bodies resembling "mashed corn." Apart from the miraculous intervention of Allâh in defense of the *Ka'bah*, this episode in Makkan history showed the strength of Abdul Muttalib's character. He stood up to Abraha's might in defense of his own property, unshakable in his faith that Allâh would protect His sacred house, the *Ka'bah*.

Abdul Muttalib's son, Abdullah, the father of the Prophet ﷺ, was a handsome youth. He was called "*Dhabih*" (the sacrificed) in reference to the rediscovery of *Zamzam*. When Abdul Muttalib was digging beside the *Ka'bah* in search of the old well, the Quraysh watched him idly. Once he began to reach wet soil, they insisted on sharing in his discovery, and they raised a great clamor. Abdul Muttalib vowed to Allâh that he would sacrifice one of his ten sons if he were allowed to uncover the well. In the end, Abdul Muttalib continued excavating and discovered the old well.

Afterwards,, he drew lots to determine which son he would sacrifice, and Abdullah was chosen. Abdul Muttalib took Abdullah to the *Ka'bah* and was prepared to sacrifice him, but the Quraysh, particularly Abdullah's brothers and maternal uncles, were opposed to the sacrifice. Finally, it was decided that one hundred camels should be sacrificed in his place. Hence the Prophet ﷺ is called the descendant of the "two sacrificed ones" (Isma'eel عليه السلام and his own father, Abdullah). Similarly, he is referred to as the descendant of the "two elders held for ransom," for Isma'eel عليه السلام was ransomed for a ram and his father for a hundred camels.

Abdullah was married to Amina, the daughter of Wahb. Wahb was a chieftain of Banu Zahra. Shortly after the marriage, Amina

became pregnant, but before she could give birth to their child, Abdullah was sent by his father to Yathrib or Syria on business. Tragically, he passed away in Yathrib on the return journey and was buried in the house of Nabgha Dhabyani.

Muhammad (ﷺ) is born

Muhammad (ﷺ) was born in She'eb Banu Hashim in Makkah. It was a Monday morning in spring, the ninth day of Rabi' Al-Awwal (according to some sources it was the twelfth of Rabi' Al-Awwal), fifty to fifty-five days after Abraha's failed attack on the *Ka'bah*. In Arabic, the word for elephant is "*Feel*," and hence the year came to be known as *'Amm Al-Feel* (the Year of the Elephant). In the Gregorian calendar, the date corresponds to April 22, 571 C.E.

While Amina was pregnant, she had a dream that a light was emitted from her lower body that illuminated the palaces of Syria. When she went into labor, Shifa bint Amr, the mother of Abdul Rahman bin Auf, served as midwife. Abdul Muttalib received the news of his grandson's birth with joy. He took the newborn to the *Ka'bah* and invoked Allâh's blessings and gave thanks.

Believing his grandson would grow up to be highly praised, Abdul Muttalib named him Muhammad, which means "he who is praised." In keeping with Arab tradition, he then shaved the baby's head and circumcised him on the seventh day. Afterwards, he invited his fellow-Makkans to a feast.

Muhammad ﷺ was first nursed by his mother, and then by Umm Ayman, his father's slave. An Abyssinian whose real name was Barakah, she embraced Islam and migrated to Madinah, where she died six months after the Prophet's death.

Foster Brothers

Thuwaybah, the slave of Muhammad's uncle Abu Lahab, also nursed the infant. At that time, Thuwaybah was also nursing her own child, Masrooh, as well as Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib and

Abu Salamah bin Abdul Asad Makhzoomi. Hence, these three men became foster brothers because they were nursed at the same breast.

In the care of Haleemah Sa'diya

It was customary among the citizens of Makkah to put their newborns in the care of Bedouin women who would raise them for a couple of years in the desert. The Makkans believed that the unspoiled, rugged desert environment would make their children strong and hardy. Furthermore, an upbringing among the Bedouins ensured that the children would learn the purest form of the Arabic language spoken throughout Arabia.

Abdul Muttalib was looking for one such Bedouin woman who would serve as a wet nurse and take his grandson to the desert. Some women from Banu Sa'd bin Bakr bin Hawazen came to Makkah to offer their services to local families. Abdul Muttalib asked each of them to take his grandson Muhammad ﷺ, but all of them declined the offer when they were told the child's father was dead. They felt the family of a fatherless child would not be able to reward them handsomely.

Haleemah bint Abu Dhuwayb had also came to Makkah that day. While all the other Bedouin women had found children to nurse, she was not so fortunate. She saw Abdul Muttalib with an infant in his arms and took pity on the child who had been rejected by the other women. She and her husband took the infant Muhammad back to the desert. Haleemah was happy she was not returning empty-handed.

Haleemah and her husband, Harith bin Abdul Uzzah, both belonged to the tribe of Sa'd bin Bakr bin Hawazen. Their children became the Prophet's foster brothers and sisters. Their names were Abdullah, Anisa, and Judhama, who was better known as Shayma. Judhama also nursed the Prophet ﷺ.

Haleemah's house is unexpectedly blessed

Haleemah and her husband found their lives changed the moment

they took Muhammad home. They had traveled to Makkah on a frail she-ass that could barely keep up with their caravan. On the return journey, however, as Haleemah rode with the infant in her arms, the same animal moved so swiftly that it left the caravan behind.

While Muhammad ﷺ stayed with Haleemah's family, the house overflowed with blessings. Haleemah herself narrated that she brought Muhammad ﷺ to her home during a drought. Her she-camel would not give a drop of milk. Haleemah's child would cry the whole night out of hunger. With the child so distraught, Haleemah and Harith found it hard to sleep at night.

Things changed, however, when Haleemah brought Muhammad ﷺ home and placed him on her lap. Her breasts overflowed with milk so that both Muhammad and her own child drank their fill of milk and fell fast asleep.

When Harith went to the she-camel, he was amazed at what he saw. The she-camel's udders were full of milk and ready to overflow. It gave so much milk that Haleemah's family was able to sleep that night on full stomachs.

Haleemah's household suddenly appeared to be untouched by the drought, although they lived in Dayar Banu Sa'd, the most drought-stricken spot in the region. The family's goats would return from grazing with their stomachs full of grass and their udders bursting with milk. Husband and wife would milk their goats often while others failed to get even a drop of milk.

Haleemah's household continued to be blessed for the next two years, after which she weaned Muhammad ﷺ. Although he grew up during a great drought, he had developed into a strong, healthy child.

Haleemah asks to keep Muhammad ﷺ longer

Every six months Haleemah would take Muhammad ﷺ to Makkah to be with his mother and other family members. She would then return with him to Dayar Banu Sa'd. After Muhammad ﷺ was

weaned, it was time for him to go back to his family for good. When Haleemah took him back to his mother, she begged Amina to let her keep the boy longer because he had brought her good fortune. She pleaded he would grow stronger and healthier in the desert, far away from the frequent epidemics that raged in Makkah. Amina consented, and Haleemah returned home with Muhammad ﷺ, happy at her extended good fortune.

Two years later, however, a strange event occurred that frightened Haleemah and her husband, prompting them to return Muhammad ﷺ to his family in Makkah.

Muhammad's chest is opened

Anas bin Malik ؓ relates that one day as Muhammad ﷺ was playing with some children near Haleemah's house, Jibreel ؑ (the angel Gabriel) appeared and made Muhammad ﷺ lie down. He then opened up the boy's chest, took out his heart, and extracted a lump of flesh from it, saying: "This is the portion of Satan in you." Then he put Muhammad's heart in a golden tray filled with *Zamzam* water, washed it and replaced it in his chest.

The other children ran to Haleemah in terror crying that Muhammad had been killed. When they reached Muhammad ﷺ, they found him alive, his face pale from shock. Anas ؓ later said that he saw the scar on the Prophet's chest where it had been sewn back together.

Muhammad's time with his mother

In the wake of this supernatural event, Muhammad ﷺ was carried back to Makkah, where for the next two years he grew up under his mother's care. When Muhammad ﷺ was six, he accompanied his grandfather, mother, and Umm Ayman on a journey to Yathrib, where his mother's family lived. It was also where his father lay buried. After a month in Yathrib, they began the long journey back to Makkah, but Amina fell ill on the way. She died at Abwa and was buried there. Muhammad ﷺ was left orphaned.

A grandfather's affection

Abdul Muttalib, himself growing old, carried Muhammad ﷺ back to Makkah. His heart was heavy, and he could not bear to see his young grandson suffer. He suddenly felt tenderness in his heart that he had never even felt for his own sons. When Abdul Muttalib sat with his friends, Muhammad ﷺ sat on a carpet next to him, a position no one else was allowed to occupy. He used to stroke his back and observe his every movement.

Abdul Muttalib was sure the future would bring Muhammad ﷺ rare greatness. Tragically, Abdul Muttalib's time with his grandson was short, for he died when Muhammad ﷺ was only eight years, two months and ten days old.

Under his uncle's care

After the death of Abdul Muttalib, his son Abu Talib took Muhammad ﷺ under his care. Abu Talib and Abdullah, the Prophet's father, were brothers, both born of the same mother. Abu Talib was not a wealthy man, but Muhammad brought Allâh's blessings with him, and suddenly Abu Talib found that he could support his family easily with a small sum of money.

Bahira's warning

When Muhammad ﷺ was twelve years old (some sources specify that he was twelve years, two months and ten days old), Abu Talib planned to accompany a trade caravan to Syria. Both Muhammad ﷺ and Abu Talib dreaded the long separation, so Abu Talib decided to take Muhammad ﷺ with him.

Once the caravan reached Basra on the border of Syria, the travelers broke journey for a short stay. A Christian monk by the name of Bahira lived in this city, and he came to welcome the caravan. He walked past all the travelers approached the young Muhammad ﷺ. Holding Muhammad's hand, he said:

"This is the chief of the world and the Messenger of the

Lord. God has sent him as a mercy for all mankind."

"Why do you say this?" the people inquired of him.

Bahira explained:

> "When he came this side of the pass, stones and trees bowed in prostration. They do not prostrate for anyone other than a Prophet. Moreover, I recognized him from the Seal of Prophethood, which lies like an apple on the soft bone below his shoulders. It is mentioned in our Scriptures."

Bahira then held a feast in honor of the caravan. Later he took Abu Talib aside and pleaded with him not to take Muhammad ﷺ any further. He urged him to send the boy back. He feared that the Jews and Romans might recognize him as the Promised Messenger, in which case, he felt, Muhammad's life would be endangered. Abu Talib heeded the monk's warnings and, concerned for his nephew's safety, sent Muhammad ﷺ back to Makkah.

Coming of age in Makkah, Muhammad ﷺ played an active role in his society and participated in some significant events in the community, two of which are recounted below.

The battle of *Fijar*

When Muhammad ﷺ was twenty years old, a battle broke out at the Fair of 'Okaz in the month of Dhul Qa'dah. The warring tribes were the Quraysh and Kinana on one side and the Qays Ghilan on the other. The fighting was fierce, and several people on both sides were killed.

At last they made peace on condition that whichever side had suffered the most casualties would get blood money (recompense for unlawful killing). This battle was the fourth and most deadly in a series of skirmishes that had erupted each of the previous three years. It would, however, be the last. It came to be known as the Battle of *Fijar* (Arabic for immorality) as it took place in a sacred

month when fighting was prohibited and violated the sanctity of a sacred month with bloodshed.

As a member of the Quraysh, Muhammad ﷺ was also present in the battle. His role was to collect the enemy's arrows and hand them over to his uncles.

Hilf Al-Fudool

In the wake of the Battle of *Fijar*, later that month a covenant was agreed upon among the five tribes of the Quraysh. It was known as *Hilf Al-Fudool* and its signatories were Banu Hashim, Banu Abdul Muttalib, Banu Asad, Banu Zahra and Banu Taym.

This covenant was born in response to a shameful denial of justice to a stranger. A man came from Zabid to sell his merchandise in Makkah. A local resident by the name of Aas bin Wayel took all of the stranger's goods, but refused to pay for them. The helpless stranger approached the people of Banu Abdul Dar, Banu Makhzoom, Banu Jamah, Banu Sahm and Banu Adiy, all of whom ignored his cry for redress. In desperation, he climbed atop a hill called Jabal Abu Qays and informed everyone of how all his goods had been stolen. Then he implored his listeners to come forward to help him. His plea was answered by Zubayr bin Abdul Muttalib, who volunteered to help the unfortunate stranger.

Zubayr called on representatives of all the clans to assemble in the house of Abdullah bin Jad'an of Banu Taym. At this assembly, the tribal leaders agreed that henceforth they would stand up for anyone who had suffered injustice, regardless of his tribal affiliation. They then forced Aas bin Wayel to return the merchandise he had taken.

Muhammad was also present with his uncles during the institution of the covenant, which he regarded as an honorable pact. Long after Allâh had made him a prophet, he was to declare:

«لَقَدْ شَهِدْتُ فِي دَارِ عَبْدِاللهِ بْنِ جَدْعَانَ حِلْفًا مَا أُحِب أَنَّ لِي بِهِ حُمْرَ النَّعَمِ، وَلَوْ أُدْعَى بِهِ فِي الإِسْلَامِ لأَجَبْتُ».

"I was present when a covenant was agreed upon in the house of Abdullah bin Jad'an, and I would not accept even a red camel in lieu of it. Had I been asked to uphold it even in the days of Islam, I would have agreed."

Choosing a profession

Having lost his parents and his grandfather, Muhammad ﷺ, who was in the care of his uncle Abu Talib, came of age with practically no inheritance. At first, he tried to make a living tending goats -for Banu Sa'd, but then upon his return to Makkah, he tended goats for the Quraysh for a small sum.

The choice of occupation was significant. Later, after becoming a prophet, Muhammad ﷺ remarked, "There has been no prophet who has not tended sheep." Noted for his trustworthiness, honesty and piety, he came to be called "*Al-Ameen*" (the Trustworthy).

Journey to Syria on business for Khadeejah

Muhammad's reputation led Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid to entrust him with her merchandise to sell in Syria. As a wealthy businesswoman from a noble family of the Quraysh, she would hire men to conduct business on her behalf. And so it happened that the young Muhammad ﷺ journeyed to Syria with her slave, Maysarah. The trip was extremely successful and profitable, and upon his return to Makkah, Muhammad gave Khadeejah her profit.

Marriage to Khadeejah

Khadeejah was twice-widowed, having been married to Ateeq bin Ayed and then to Abu Hala. While married to Abu Hala, she bore a son. Following her second husband's death, she received several proposals from various chiefs of the Quraysh, all of which she refused. Now, however, impressed by Maysarah's description of Muhammad's character, she broached the topic of marriage to Muhammad ﷺ through her friend, Nafeesah.

Being open to the idea, he consulted his uncles, who sent his

proposal to Amr bin Asad, Khadeejah's uncle. Amr accepted on his niece's behalf, and Muhammad gave twenty camels as dowry (some sources mention that he gave her six camels). They were married in the presence of the Banu Hashim and the chiefs of the Quraysh. Praising and glorifying Allâh, Abu Talib recited the wedding sermon and formalized the union. Thus within two months and some days within Muhammad's return from Syria, he and Khadeejah were married. He was twenty-five years old, while she was either twenty-eight or forty.

Khadeejah was Muhammad's first wife. He married none other during her lifetime. She bore all his children except for Ibraheem, who was born to Mariya Qibtiya (Mary the Copt). They were named (in order of birth) Qasim, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthoom, Fatimah, Abdullah, and Ibraheem (scholars, however, disagree about the exact number and order of births). All the sons passed away during childhood, but all the daughters lived to see their father become a prophet. Each daughter embraced Islam and migrated to Madinah, and all but Fatimah died during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ. Fatimah died six months after her father's death.

Dispute over the Black Stone

When Muhammad was thirty-five years old, a devastating flood damaged the *Ka'bah*. The walls of the *Ka'bah* had been weakened by a fire earlier, and the flood caused additional cracks to form. The structure revered by the Quraysh was in danger of collapse.

Seeing their house of worship under threat of ruin, the Quraysh decided to rebuild the *Ka'bah*. They resolved not to taint the project with resources gained through usury, prostitution, or larceny.

As the walls of the *Ka'bah* had to be torn down before they could be rebuilt, the Quraysh feared Allâh would punish anyone who raised his hand against the Sacred House. Waleed bin Mugheera was the first to approach the *Ka'bah*. Declaring, "Allâh will not destroy reformers," he began to dismantle the walls of the *Ka'bah*. When others saw that he had done so untouched by divine wrath,

they joined in the work. They demolished the *Ka'bah* down to the original foundation laid by Ibraheem عليه السلام (Abraham).

Then the construction started with each tribe being allotted specific duties. The nobles among them carried pieces of stone and piled them up in one place. Muhammad ﷺ and his uncle Abbas were among those carrying stones.

A Roman mason named Baqoom reconstructed the walls. However, the tribes were unable to collect enough money to rebuild the *Ka'bah* completely, so a small wall was built showing the boundaries of the original foundation laid by Ibraheem عليه السلام. This small wall enclosed an area of about six cubits on the northern side of the *Ka'bah* and is called Hijr Isma'eel.

When the wall was completed up to the spot where the Black Stone (*Al-Hajr Al-Aswad*) was located, a dispute arose. Each chieftain claimed the honor of putting the Black Stone in place. The crisis continued for four or five days, and bloodshed was imminent. At that time Abu Umayya—the oldest among them—found a solution to the problem. He suggested that the next man who entered the gate of the *Ka'bah* should be given the authority to settle the dispute. Everyone agreed to this suggestion, and it was the will of Allâh that the next man to enter the gate was Muhammad ﷺ.

"It's Muhammad," they said as soon as they saw him coming. "Since he is trustworthy, we all agree to abide by his decision." When Muhammad ﷺ learned the details of the dispute, he asked them to bring a sheet. He then took the Black Stone, and placing it on the sheet, asked each clan to take hold of an edge of the sheet and lift it in unison. When the Black Stone was lifted up by the tribal chieftains, Muhammad ﷺ pushed it into place with his own hands. Everyone was satisfied with Muhammad's decision, and a great conflict was averted.

The Black Stone rests about one and a half meters above the ground, with the *Ka'bah* door about half a meter above the Black

Stone. The Quraysh did not lower the position of the door because they did not want anyone to enter the *Ka'bah* without their permission. They also doubled the height of the walls from nine to eighteen cubits, added a roof (fifteen cubits in height), and six pillars in two rows inside the *Ka'bah* to support it.

Muhammad's character before prophethood

From childhood, Muhammad ﷺ was exceptionally intelligent and chaste and was highly regarded for his honesty, valor, justice, piety, patience, modesty, loyalty and hospitality. Abu Talib described his beloved nephew in the following words:

> He is fair and handsome. From his visage, mercy falls like rain. He is a shelter for the orphan and a protector of widows.

Muhammad ﷺ maintained good relations with his family, bore others' burdens, and guided the destitute towards self-sufficiency.

In keeping with his future role as Allâh's Messenger, one who was to outlaw all aspects of idolatry and polytheism, Muhammad ﷺ had an inherent hatred for the prevailing paganism of his time. Thus, although he was an integral part of his society, Muhammad ﷺ never attended any of the important local festivals and fairs that revolved around idol worship and drinking. He was also careful not to eat the flesh of any animal slaughtered in the name of someone other than Allâh, and avoided touching or even coming close to idols. He especially detested hearing oaths sworn upon the pagans' two most famous idols, Lat and Uzza.

Portents of Prophethood

With his aversion to some of the most cohesive social ties in Makkan society, it was inevitable that Muhammad ﷺ would grow apart from his fellow Makkans and their depraved way of life that included public drunkenness and female infanticide. He began to long for solitude, and preferred to spend his time alone, away from the noisy festivals and crowded markets. At the same time, he felt the need to save his people from the destruction he felt was

imminent.

His discontent grew, and he began to seek refuge in the cave of Hira[2]. Here he would spend long periods alone, and it was here that he worshipped not idols or imagined gods, but the one true God—Allâh.

Following the monotheistic practice of his forefather, Ibraheem, every year, for three consecutive years, he spent the month of Ramadan in the cave. He would then return to Makkah, circumambulate the *Ka'bah*, and then go back home.

When Muhammad ﷺ reached forty years of age, he began to experience what could be called portents of prophethood. He would have visions, and whatever appeared to him in these visions and dreams would come true.

The first revelation

Late one Monday night, just before sunrise on the twenty-first of Ramadan (August 10, 610 C.E.), an event transformed the life of the man chosen to deliver Allâh's message, just as it would change the lives of countless beings, most of whom were yet to be born. According to the lunar calendar, Muhammad ﷺ was forty years, six months and twelve days old, and according to the solar calendar, he was thirty-nine years, three months and twenty-two days old.

He was alone in the cave of Hira, engaged in worshipping Allâh just like he had done the previous two Ramadans. Aishah, who has narrated so many of the Prophet's words and deeds, relates Muhammad's transition from an ordinary man to someone who would forever be known simply as "the Prophet":

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[2] Mount Hira is now known as Jabal Al-Noor (Mountain of Light). It is located is a little less than four meters in length and a little more than one and a half about two miles from Makkah, and its peak is visible from a distance. The cave meters in width.

The Prophet ﷺ first began to have revelations in the form of good dreams which came true. Then he began to like solitude. He would go to the cave of Hira and meditate there in solitude for a number of days and nights. He would take provisions with him to stay for an extended period, and when he returned to Khadeejah, he would stock up again and go back to the cave. This was his practice until Truth was revealed to him by an angel while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel said to him, "Read!"

"I cannot read," Muhammad ﷺ replied. The angel then took hold of him and pressed him until he could not endure it any longer. The angel let him go and said once again, "Read!"

"I cannot read," Muhammad ﷺ replied. The angel took hold of him a second time and pressed him until he could not endure it any longer. After letting him go, the angel said, "Read!"

"I cannot read," Muhammad ﷺ repeated. For a third time, the angel took hold of him and pressed him until he could not endure it any longer. The angel released him and said, "Read in the name of your Lord, the Creator. He Who created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Bounteous."

The Prophet ﷺ was terrified and his heart was pounding hard. He returned home to Khadeejah and said, "Cover me! Cover me!" Khadeejah covered him and helped him calm down. He related what had happened in the cave, and said, "I fear that something has happened to me."

"Never," Khadeejah replied. "I swear by Allâh, Allâh would never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your family, help the feeble and destitute, serve your guests generously, and assist those who deserve help."

Khadeejah then took the Prophet ﷺ to her cousin, the old and venerable Waraqa bin Naufal. He knew Hebrew and was familiar with the Gospels, having left paganism for Christianity.

"O my cousin," Khadeejah began. "Listen to your nephew."

"What have you seen, my nephew?" asked the blind old man. The Prophet ﷺ told Waraqa what had happened in the cave. "The angel that was sent to you is the same angel that Allâh sent to Musa. I wish I were young and could live to see the day your own people drive you out of this city."

"Will they drive me out?" the Prophet ﷺ asked.

"Yes," replied Naufal. "Never has a man brought something such as what you have without meeting hostility. If I live to see the day you are expelled, I will support you with all my might." A few days later, however, Waraqa died, and a long time passed before the Prophet ﷺ received a second revelation.

The Qur'ân tells us that the first revelation descended in Ramadan on the "Night of Power."

﴿ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أُنزِلَ فِيهِ ٱلْقُرْءَانُ ﴾ [البقرة: ١٨٥]

> "The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed." (2:185)

And:

﴿ إِنَّآ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ فِى لَيْلَةِ ٱلْقَدْرِ ﴾ [القدر: ١]

> "We have indeed revealed this Message during the Night of Power." (97:1)

A hiatus

After Jibreel ﷺ first appeared before Muhammad ﷺ at the cave of Hira, a long time passed without any further revelation. A distressed Muhammad ﷺ feared Allâh had abandoned him. Why had his Lord deserted him? In moments of despair, he would want to throw himself off a mountain, but then he would sense Jibreel's presence and become calm again. This interim period was a time of contemplation, a time for Muhammad ﷺ to prepare himself for what lay ahead.

One day Muhammad ﷺ returned to the cave of Hira to worship in

solitude. As he left the cave and began to descend the mountain, another strange event took place. The Prophet ﷺ described the event as follows:

> When I descended the mountain and came to the valley, I heard a voice saying, "Muhammad! You are the Prophet of Allâh, and I am Jibreel!" Then I raised my head and on the horizon, I saw the angel who had come to me in the cave of Hira. I was filled with awe and bowed towards the earth. I hurried home to Khadeejah and asked her to wrap me up. She put a blanket around me and sprinkled water on me.

It was at this time that the Prophet ﷺ received the second revelation. It comprised the first five verses of *Surah Al-Muddaththir*:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمُدَّثِّرُ ○ قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ ○ وَرَبَّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ○ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ○ وَٱلرُّجْزَ فَٱهْجُرْ ○ وَلَا تَمْنُن تَسْتَكْثِرُ ○ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَٱصْبِرْ ﴾ [المدثر: ١-٧]

> "O you wrapped in garments! Arise and warn! Magnify your Lord, and your clothing purify! Shun idols and false worship! And give not a thing in order to have more (or consider not your deeds of obedience to Allâh as a favour to Him). And be patient for the sake of your Lord (i.e. perform your duty to Allâh)." (74: 1-7)

This revelation with its instructions regarding worship came before Muhammad ﷺ was instructed to perform regular prayers (*Salâh*). It marked the resumption of visitations by Jibreel, and subsequent revelations came in quick succession.

Muhammad ﷺ had been appointed as a prophet with the first revelation. With the second revelation, he was made Allâh's Messenger, entrusted with two tasks. The first task was to "arise and warn." He was ordered to teach his people about Allâh and to warn them about the consequences of their sins.

The Prophet's second task was to obey the commands of Allâh and

act as a model for others. The *Surah* contains a series of instructions to the Prophet, and a line by line examination reveals the basic religious practices ordered in Islam. In the original Arabic, the phrase *fakabbir* in the first verse means: Worship Allâh alone without associating any partners with Him. In the second verse, the expression *thiyaabaka fatahhir* literally means: Purify your clothing; but according to Muslim scholars, it also means: Purify your conduct. The next verse, *warrujza fahjur* enjoins the Prophet ﷺ to: Abstain from the pagan customs of the Arabs. The verse *la tamnun tastakthir* means: Do not expect to be rewarded in this world for your efforts. Finally, *wa lirabbika fasbir* means: Be patient for your Lord's sake.

The mission begins

Muhammad ﷺ accepted his duties as prophet and messenger with resolute obedience. He answered his Lord's call by inviting members of his household to worship Allâh in keeping with His commandments. They were to be Muslims, those who had surrendered to Allâh, and their religion was Islam, the religion of peace. However, the Prophet's compatriots were a rough people accustomed to settling their disputes with swords. They clung to idol worship because it had been the practice of their ancestors who had strayed far from the pure monotheism of Ibraheem and Isma'eel. Sensing their antagonism, the Prophet began to quietly teach those closest to him, those whose hearts he felt would be open to the truth.

The first believers

Khadeejah was the first person to believe her husband had been chosen as Allâh's Messenger and Prophet. As his wife, she knew more than anyone else did that Muhammad ﷺ was no ordinary man: his sublime character and innate morality set him apart from those he lived among. She had heard talk about Allâh's final prophet who was yet to appear. She had also heard about some of the strange and miraculous events that others had witnessed

concerning Muhammad ﷺ. Furthermore, she had heard Waraqa say that the angel who had come to the cave of Hira was none other than Jibreel عليه السلام, and that this angel had brought Muhammad ﷺ a revelation from Allâh. Lastly, she was present at the moment *Surah Al-Muddaththir* was revealed. It was therefore only natural that she was the first to believe in Muhammad and his appointment as Allâh's final messenger.

Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه was also among the first people to become Muslim. When the verses of *Al-Muddaththir* were revealed, the Prophet ﷺ went to Abu Bakr, who was a leading Makkan trader and a prominent figure in his own right, and told him what had happened. Two years younger than the Prophet, he was thoroughly familiar with his friend's character and the reputation he enjoyed in the community for truthfulness. Abu Bakr did not doubt Muhammad's declaration of his prophethood, just as he did not refuse his invitation to Islam. With his declaration of faith, he became one of the first Muslims.

Ali bin Abu Talib رضي الله عنه was only a child when the Prophet's mission began, and some sources indicate that he was ten years old when he became Muslim. He was living under the Prophet's guardianship since his father, Abu Talib, was unable to provide for all his children. Muhammad ﷺ was like a second father to the boy, who believed without a doubt that his guardian was indeed a prophet, and that he had brought the truth.

Among the first to accept the faith was also the Prophet's freedman, Zayd bin Harith bin Sharahbeel Kalbi. Sold into slavery in the pre-Islamic era, Zayd had refused to leave the Prophet ﷺ when his relatives tried to buy his freedom. For a while he was known as Zayd bin Muhammad, but following the prohibition of giving adopted children the names of their foster parents, he was referred to by his actual name as mentioned above. Notwithstanding the change of name, Zayd's love for the Prophet was deep and the bond between the two was enduring.

These four (Khadeejah, Abu Bakr, Ali, and Zayd رضي الله عنهم) accepted Islam the same day the opening verses of *Surah Al-Muddaththir* were revealed. Some sources hold that they accepted Islam in the same order as given above.

Life changed for the new Muslims who desired to reform the religious practice of their families and friends. After his conversion, Abu Bakr began to encourage others to abandon idol worship and follow Allâh's Messenger. A well-respected merchant, known for his generosity and intelligence, Abu Bakr was the foremost authority on Arab genealogy. His reputation and his character ensured that people gravitated to him, and if he deemed a person was sincere in finding the truth, he would talk to him about his new faith. Many people were interested in what he told them about Islam, and they went with him to the Prophet ﷺ. Among those who became Muslim in this way were Uthman bin Affan Umwi, Zubayr bin Awwam Asadi, Abdul Rahman bin Auf Zuhri, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas Zuhri, and Talha bin Ubaydullah Taymi.

Many others from the Quraysh later became Muslims: Abu Ubaydah Amir bin Jarrah; Abu Salamah bin Abdul Asad and his wife, Umm Salamah; Arqam bin Abil-Arqam; Uthman bin Madh'un and his brothers Qadam bin Madh'un and Abdullah bin Madh'un; Ubaydah bin Harith bin Muttalib bin Abdu Munaf; Sa'eed bin Zayd bin Amr bin Nafil and his wife (the sister of Umar), Fatimah bint Khattab; Khabbab bin Aratt, Ja'far bin Abi Talib and his wife, Asmaa bint Umays; Khalid bin Sa'eed bin As and his wife, Amina bint Khalaf, his brother, Amr bin Sa'eed bin As; Hatib bin Harith and his wife, Fatimah bint Mujalil, his brother, Khattab bin Harith, his wife, Fakiha bint Yasir, and his other brother, Muammar bin Harith; Muttalib bin Azhar and his wife, Ramla bint Abi Auf; and Na'im bin Abdullah bin Naham.

More believers came from other tribes to embrace Islam: Abdullah bin Mas'ood Hadhli; Mas'ood bin Rabi'a Qari; Abdullah bin Jahsh and his brother, Abu Ahad bin Jahsh; Suhayb bin Sinan Rumi; Ammar bin Yasir Ansi and his parents, Yasir and Sumayya;

and Amir bin Fuhayrah.

Umm Ayman Barakah, the Prophet's father's Abyssinian slave who had looked after the Prophet during his childhood, also became Muslim, as did Ummul Fadal Lababatul Kubra bint Harith Hilalya, and Asmaa bint Abu Bakr Siddeeq.

These and others who embraced Islam in the early days of Islam are called the "Earliest Believers." Scholars put their number at 130, but the exact time of their declaration of faith cannot be determined. Such a list includes those Companions also who embraced Islam after the Prophet ﷺ began preaching his message openly.

Worship and training of the believers

Despite the long gap between the first and second revelations, subsequent revelations came in quick succession after *Surah Al-Muddaththir*. The next *Surah* to be revealed was *Surah Al-Fâtihah.*

Surah Al-Muddaththir was not a set of instructions for the Prophet ﷺ alone. Its message was explicit for the believers as well. In its verses they were given a set of rules to live by, rules that still bind Muslims to the laws of Allâh. The *Surah* teaches the believers how to praise and invoke Allâh, some of whose principal attributes are also mentioned in the verses. We learn through it that each person will reap what good or bad he sows in this world, and that he will receive the recompense for it in the next world. It guides one to the way of true success.

Other duties and acts of worship were instituted with subsequent revelations. Once the bedrock of faith in Allâh and His Messenger had been firmly established, the believers were instructed to build on their faith with acts of worship. The first duty ordained at the beginning of the Prophet's mission was *Salâh* (prayer). Jibreel عليه السلام taught the Prophet ﷺ how to perform prayers and *Wudu* (ablution), and asked him to offer two *Rak'ah* (units of prayer) morning and

evening.

Since *Wudu* was made a prerequisite of prayer, perfect purity became the sign of a believer. *Salâh* was based on *Surah Al-Fâtihah*, the opening *Surah* of the Qur'ân, and praise and glorification of Allâh punctuated each movement made during prayer. *Salâh* was now established as the mainstay of the believer's faith, an act of worship to be offered twice a day. Trying to keep their worship pristine, far from the idolatrous practices of Makkah, the believers would perform *Salâh* in secluded places like vales and passes.

At this stage, the Prophet's revelations focused mainly on the articles of faith and the different aspects of *Tawheed* (Oneness of Allâh). These early revelations exhorted the Prophet's Companions to purify their souls, aroused in them a sense of morality, and vividly described Paradise and Hell. With their themes of the transience of life, the permanence of the hereafter, eternal joy and everlasting punishment, the verses of the Qur'ân offered much in the way of inspiration and admonition.

The Prophet ﷺ taught his followers the meanings of the verses revealed to him, and he offered them a perfect model of how to live by the teachings of the Qur'ân. He led them from the darkness of unbelief to the light of faith by showing them the Straight Path and counseling them to hold fast to the Religion of Allâh.

Although the Prophet ﷺ had not yet preached his message in public, the Quraysh came to know of his activities. Some of the believers openly practised their new faith, but the Quraysh in general paid no attention to it. Similarly, the Prophet ﷺ did not oppose them or their gods.

Open propagation of Islam

The first three years of the Prophet's mission had focused on bringing the message of Islam to individuals. A discerning few among the Quraysh and other tribes had embraced Islam, but their numbers were hardly overwhelming. Now Allâh ordered his

Messenger ﷺ to warn his kinsmen about idolatry. He was also asked to keep in his fold those who believed in the Message and to renounce ties with those who rejected his mission.

After receiving this order, the Prophet ﷺ assembled his nearest kindred, the tribe of Banu Hashim, including a few people from Banu Muttalib. Addressing the gathering, he first praised and glorified Allâh and bore witness to His Oneness. Then he told them:

> "I am the Messenger of Allâh, and have been sent to you in particular, and to all mankind in general. I swear by Allâh that you will die in the same way you sleep every night, and you will be resurrected similar to how you rise from sleep in the morning. Following this, your account will be taken from you and then your good will be paid with good, and bad with bad."

The Prophet's audience let him have his say. His uncle Abu Lahab was alone in saying, "Stop him before all Arabia unites against him. If you hand him over to them then, you will be put to disgrace. And if you try to save him, you will be killed."

The Prophet's other uncle, Abu Talib, said, "I swear by Allâh that we will protect him as long as we live." Abu Talib then told his nephew, "You try to fulfill what you have been ordered to do. By Allâh, I shall always defend you, even though I prefer not to abandon the religion of Abdul Muttalib."

A warning from atop Mount Safa

During the same period Allâh told the Prophet ﷺ: "Announce openly what you are commanded, and withdraw from the idolaters." In compliance with Allâh's order, he ascended the heights of Mount Safa, a small rocky hill near the *Ka'bah*, and cried out from the highest point: "*Ya Sabahah*!"

The cry "*Ya Sabahah*" was normally used to warn citizens of impending doom, surprise attacks or other great calamities. Once

he had alerted his fellow Makkans that something terrible was upon them, the Prophet ﷺ then called every family and every household by name: "O sons of Fiher! O sons of Adiy! O sons of Abdu Munaf! O sons of Abdul Muttalib! O sons of...."

The people heard their names being called, and they rushed to Mount Safa. Those who were unable to go themselves sent someone on their behalf to see what had happened.

When they were all assembled, the Prophet ﷺ said: "If I told you that horsemen were advancing to attack you from the valley on the other side of this hill, would you believe me?"

"Yes," they replied, bewildered at his question. "We have always found you honest."

Then he said to them:

> "I am here to warn you before a severe chastisement reaches you. I see the enemy charging toward you, and I want to protect you from his sword, but I fear he will strike you before I can give you warning. This is why I have cried out to you from atop this hill."

After this vivid analogy the Prophet ﷺ asked them to save themselves by declaring that Allâh was one, and that he, Muhammad, was his Messenger: *La ilaaha illallâh, Muhammad Rasoolullah.* He also explained to them that this testimony (*Shahâdah*) was the only source of salvation in this world and in the hereafter. He tried to make them understand that if they clung to polytheism and rejected the message he had brought to them, they would face Allâh's punishment, and that he (the Prophet) would not be able to save them despite his status as Allâh's Messenger.

Addressing all segments of Makkan society, he further said:

> "O people of Quraysh, ransom yourselves from Allâh and save yourselves from the Fire of Hell, for I am not the master

> of your gain and loss, nor can I be of any help in saving you from Allâh. O Banu Ka'b bin Lu'ayy, save yourselves from Hell, for I am not the master of your gain and loss.
>
> "O Banu Qusayy! Save yourselves from Hell. O Banu Abdu Munaf! Save yourselves from Hell, for I am not the master of your gain and loss. O Banu Hashim! Save yourselves from Hell. O Banu Abdul Muttalib! Save yourselves from Hell, for I am not the master of your gain and loss, and cannot save you from Allâh. Take from my property as much as you desire, but I have no power to save you from Allâh.
>
> "O Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib! I can be of no help to you in saving you from Allâh. O Aunt of the Messenger, Safiyah bint Abdul Muttalib! I can be of no help to you in saving you from Allâh. O Fatimah, daughter of the Messenger! Ask for whatever you want from my property, but save yourself from Hell. I cannot be of any help to you either from Allâh. However, I am related to you, and I will fulfill my obligations accordingly."

After listening to this warning from the Prophet ﷺ, the assembly dispersed. There is no record of their immediate support or opposition. However, Abu Lahab is reported to have said, enraged, "May you be cursed! Is it for this you have brought us here?"

Generally, the Prophet's audience seems to have been somewhat amazed at the Prophet's outpourings and could not decide just then as to what they should do. Once they returned to their homes, however, their arrogance reasserted itself, and they disdained the Prophet's warning and exhortation. Thus when the Prophet ﷺ passed by their elders, they would jeer, "Is this the one who has been appointed a Messenger by Allâh? Is this the boy of Abu Kabshah who is addressed from the sky?"

Abu Kabshah was an ancestor of the Prophet ﷺ on his mother's side. He had abandoned the paganism of the Quraysh and

embraced Christianity. Hence, when the Prophet ﷺ began proclaiming the monotheistic message of Islam, the Quraysh were quick to link him with another so-called renegade of their society.

Despite the taunts of his tribesmen and their increasing hostility, the Prophet ﷺ remained firm in his mission and began to invite people to Islam. He would recite verses from the Book of Allâh, giving his people the same message that previous prophets had given to their people. He would say, "O my people! Worship Allâh without any partners or intermediaries, for none is your god except Allâh."

He also began to pray to Allâh in public, offering prayers in the courtyard surrounding the *Ka'bah*. The Prophet's preaching gradually gained ground. As more people, one by one, came into the fold of Islam, a gap started widening between the believers and non-believers even in the same house. Of course, this only increased the resentment and hostility of the Quraysh who found it unforgivable that the new Muslims would choose Islam over family, tribe, and culture – ties they deemed sacrosanct.

The Quraysh warn pilgrims

With the Muslims growing in number, the Quraysh became increasingly perturbed. It was close to the time of the annual pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to the *Ka'bah*, and people from all over the peninsula were expected in Makkah before long. The Quraysh feared the Muslims would attract and influence the visitors. They also worried about the loss of face that would ensue if a rival religion flourished in the stronghold of their gods. A delegation of the Quraysh called on Waleed bin Mugheera, who was old and a man of standing.

He said, "O people of Quraysh, the time of *Hajj* has come, and people from all sides will come to you. They have all heard about Muhammad, so agree upon what to say about him lest you contradict one another."

The people said, "You say something and decide on a course for us."

He said, "No, you speak and I shall listen to you."

The people said, "Well, we will say that he is a soothsayer."

"He is not a soothsayer," said Waleed. "He neither speaks nor versifies like them."

"Then we will say he is mad," someone suggested.

"He is not mad," Waleed said. "We all know the signs of madness. He does not behave erratically, nor is his speech confused."

"Then we shall say that he is a poet."

"But he is not a poet," Waleed pointed out. "We know the different kinds of poetry, and his words can't be compared to any of them. He is, therefore, not a poet."

"Well, we will say he is a sorcerer,"another suggested haplessly.

"He is not a sorcerer either. We have seen sorcery and sorcerers. He practices neither the art of exorcism nor the tying of knots," Waleed explained.

The people said: "What shall we say then?"

Waleed thought for a moment and said, "By God, his words are sweet, fresh and attractive. His root is firm and his branches are fruitful. Hence, whatever you claim about him will not be believed. However, it is more convincing, in my opinion, if you were to present him as a sorcerer. You should say that he has brought a message by which he creates a rift between father and son, brother and brother, husband and wife. Under his influence family ties have been rent asunder, and every day families break up because of him."

Having agreed upon this line of defense, the Quraysh formed small groups to spread the propaganda. They waited along the different paths leading the pilgrims to their destination and

would caution every passer-by about the Prophet, with the result that almost everyone formed an impression of the Prophet ﷺ without having seen or heard him.

When the days of *Hajj* came, the Prophet rose to meet the pilgrims in gatherings. He also called on them at their camps to invite them to Islam. He would say: "O people! Say *La ilaaha illallâh* and you will attain success." Abu Lahab, meanwhile, would walk behind the Prophet ﷺ, belittling him. Thus, by the time the pilgrims returned from *Hajj* that year, all of Arabia knew of Muhammad ﷺ and his mission, either through his own efforts or those of his detractors.

Various strategies against Islam

After performing *Hajj*, the pilgrims returned home to face the disquieting issue of a new, rival religion. Having lapsed into polytheism for so long, the Arabs saw Islam as a new religion, one they had to stamp out. They refused to acknowledge that it was simply a return to the pristine monotheism preached by their forefathers, Ibraheem and Isma'eel.

The outraged pagans devised various ways to deal with the current situation, confident that these plans, when put into action, would vanquish the threat of Islam. Their tactics included ridicule, abuse, slander, debate, and open harassment of the Prophet ﷺ and his followers.

Ridicule, contempt and mockery

To demoralize and demean the Messenger of Allâh, the pagan Arabs began to vilify him: "This is a poet, a madman, a soothsayer ... Satan comes to him and teaches him ... He is a sorcerer, a liar."

When they encountered the Prophet ﷺ, they would glare at him and say scornfully: "This is the man who decries our gods!" The idolaters would taunt the Muslims as they passed by them: "Look! The rulers of the earth come to you. Has Allâh entrusted

us to them?" This was a contemptuous reference to the weak social stature of the Muslim minority who had dared to confront the powerful majority.

The unjust ridicule and condemnation deeply hurt even the Prophet ﷺ. Allâh says:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ﴾ [الحجر: ٩٧]

"We know that your breast is distressed by what they say." (15:97)

Allâh then revealed verses of inspiration and comfort to help the Prophet ﷺ remain steadfast:

﴿ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُن مِّنَ ٱلسَّٰجِدِينَ ﴾ [الحجر: ٩٨]

"Therefore, magnify the praises of your Lord, and be among those who prostrate themselves before Him." (15:98)

In other verses, the Prophet ﷺ was told that Allâh alone would judge the evildoers and polytheists, and that they would soon reap the fruit of their evil deeds. Consoling himself and his followers, the Prophet ﷺ said, "The messengers who came before me have also been laughed at and condemned, but the mockers found themselves surrounded on all sides by their own disdain."

Diversions

Not content with slandering and humiliating the Prophet ﷺ, the pagans also attempted to keep others from hearing the Prophet's message. Whenever he tried to preach to a group of people, the pagans would disperse the crowd before he had a chance to convey his message. The first opportunity to preach in public came in Ramadan of the fifth year of the Prophet's mission. It was then that he recited *Surah Al-Najm* before a large gathering.

Whenever the Prophet ﷺ recited the Qur'ân (which was usually during the latter part of the night in voluntary prayer), the

polytheists would make profane remarks about the Qur'ân, the One Who had revealed it and the one who brought it to the people. Hence, Allâh ordered the Prophet ﷺ to lower his voice when reciting:

﴿ وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَٱبْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴾ [الإسراء: ١١٠]

"Recite your prayers neither in a very loud voice nor silently: follow a middle course." (17:110)

To divert people's attention away from the stories of the Qur'ân, Nadir bin Harith went to Hira and Syria and came back with the legends of Dara (Darius), Sikandar, (Alexander) and Isfandyar (a Persian king). Whenever he learned that the Prophet ﷺ was addressing an assembly, he would rush there and begin narrating these tales. He would then ask listeners how the orations of Muhammad could possibly be superior to his.

Nadir then went a step further and purchased singing girls. If he heard that a certain person was considering becoming Muslim, he would carry the person to a courtesan and ask her to entertain him and to serve him food and drink. Then he would tell the would-be Muslim that the company of the courtesan was far better than what Muhammad had to say.

Allâh then revealed the following verse:

﴿ وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِى لَهْوَ ٱلْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴾ [لقمان: ٦]

"There are, among men, those who ignorantly purchase meaningless tales to mislead men from the path of Allâh, and they take the Words of Allâh as a mockery. They will certainly endure a humiliating punishment." (31:6)

Propaganda

When the pagans did not succeed in stamping out Islam by mocking the Prophet ﷺ or by diverting people's attention from his teachings, they then attempted to discredit him.

First, they claimed that the Qur'ân was nothing but a bundle of confused dreams which Muhammad had at night and then recited during the day. Next, they claimed that he had concocted the Qur'ân line for line all by himself, while at other times they said that a certain man composed the Qur'ân for him, and Muhammad then simply memorized and recited the verses.

On other occasions the pagans said that the Qur'ân was all lies he had fabricated with the help of others. They also asserted that the Qur'ân was a collection of folk tales and ancient stories which Muhammad recited morning and evening. They even went so far as to say that an evil jinn or demon taught the verses of the Qur'ân to Muhammad. Thereupon Allâh said:

﴿هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن تَنَزَّلُ ٱلشَّيَـٰطِينُ ۝ تَنَزَّلُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ﴾ [الشعراء: ٢٢١-٢٢٢]

"Shall I inform you about those upon whom demons descend? They descend upon every sinful liar!" (26:221-222)

The pagans also spread the rumor that the Prophet ﷺ suffered from fits and seizures. These frenzied fits, the pagans claimed, were the source of Muhammad's poetic inspiration! In reply to this claim, Allâh said:

﴿وَٱلشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ ٱلْغَاوُۥنَ ۝ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِى كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ ۝ وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ﴾ [الشعراء: ٢٢٤-٢٢٦]

"As for poets, only those who are astray follow them. They ramble aimlessly about every subject, claiming to have done things that they have not done." (26: 224-226)

In this verse, Allâh challenges the pagans' claim that Muhammad was a poet. Three characteristics of poets are mentioned: their followers are deviants; they expound about subjects without

discretion; and they boast about deeds they did not perform. When we scrutinize the Prophet's character and those of his followers, however, we find that they were upright; Muhammad's teachings focused on calling people to worship Allâh, the one God; and that Muhammad ﷺ put his teachings into action and lived by the precepts he taught his followers.

Argument and quibbling

There were three tenets of the Prophet's teachings that the pagans found unacceptable. In fact, these three concepts were the source of much of the discord between them and the Muslims. The notion of resurrection on the Day of Judgment, the idea of a mortal prophet and the concept of the unity of Allâh (*Tawheed*) were, in their eyes, incredible and absurd.

The concept of resurrection, they believed, was no more than a fanciful idea. They would say, "How can we be raised again after being reduced to dust and bone? How can our ancestors be brought back to life?" Talking among themselves, they would mock the Prophet's teaching regarding the resurrection and the hereafter. "Come. I will show you someone who claims that you will be raised anew after being torn into pieces. Who knows whether he is inventing stories about God or has gone mad?"

Allâh Himself explains the notion of resurrection in several verses of the Qur'ân. Whereas the pagans found it illogical, the Qur'ân appeals to our sense of justice and presents resurrection as an essential, natural component of the life cycle.

The Qur'ân asks us to imagine the case of an oppressor who dies without having been punished for the suffering he inflicted. In addition, what about the case of someone who dies having suffered unjustly at the hands of an oppressor? Alternatively, we may even consider the case of a virtuous person who dies without having been rewarded for his virtue, or an evil person who was never punished for his unjust deeds. If nothing happens to a person after death, and if death is indeed the final chapter of

our lives, then each person mentioned above would merely lie in a grave for eternity.

In this case, the oppressors and wrong-doers, in fact, would emerge victorious because death would protect them from being held accountable for their actions, while those who suffered unjustly in this life would never be rewarded. However, our sense of justice rejects the idea that such an unfair system could have been created by Allâh, Who is more just than any of His creations. Such a corrupt system would encourage people to do as they pleased without fear of retribution. Allâh says in the Qur'ân:

﴿ أَفَنَجْعَلُ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ كَٱلْمُجْرِمِينَ ۝ مَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ ﴾ [القلم: ٣٥-٣٦]

"Shall We treat those who believe the same as those who are corrupt? What has happened to you? How can you believe such a thing?" (68:35-36)

﴿ أَمْ حَسِبَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱجْتَرَحُوا۟ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ أَن نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّـٰلِحَـٰتِ سَوَآءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ۚ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴾ [الجاثية: ٢١]

"Or do those who spread evil think that We shall consider them equal to the virtuous believers, both in this world and in the next? How corrupt is their judgment!" (45:21)

Is it rational to believe that Allâh can give life to that which is dead? Allâh says:

﴿ ءَأَنتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمِ ٱلسَّمَآءُ ۚ بَنَىٰهَا ﴾ [النازعات: ٢٧]

"What is more difficult to create: you, or the heavens that He placed above your heads?" (79:27)

﴿ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْىَ بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقَـٰدِرٍ عَلَىٰٓ أَن يُحْـِۧىَ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ ۚ بَلَىٰٓ إِنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾ [الأحقاف: ٣٣]

"Do they not understand that Allâh, He Who created the heavens and earth effortlessly, is able to resurrect the dead? Indeed, Allâh has power over all things." (46:33)

He also says:

﴿ كَمَا بَدَأْنَآ أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُّعِيدُهُۥ ۚ وَعْدًا عَلَيْنَآ ۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا فَٰعِلِينَ ﴾ [الأنبياء: ١٠٤]

"Just as We began creation, We shall repeat it once again. This is a promise that We have made, and We shall certainly carry it out." (21:104)

Others argued that although Allâh is the creator of the universe, it is impossible to reconstruct something once it has been destroyed. Allâh refutes this argument, pointing out that it is easier to reconstruct and revive something than to create it from nothing.

﴿ أَفَعَيِينَا بِٱلْخَلْقِ ٱلْأَوَّلِ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ فِى لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴾ [ق: ١٥]

"Have We become exhausted after creating the universe once? Verily, they are confused about the next act of creation." (50:15)

Although the Quraysh considered Muhammad ﷺ to be a truthful man, they had difficulty accepting him as a prophet and messenger of Allâh. They believed that a mere man could not be entrusted with such a lofty office. When Muhammad ﷺ proclaimed his prophethood and messengership, the Quraysh responded by saying:

﴿ وَقَالُوا۟ مَالِ هَٰذَا ٱلرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ ٱلطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِى فِى ٱلْأَسْوَاقِ ﴾ [الفرقان: ٧]

"What kind of Messenger is this that eats food and walks through the markets?" (25:7)

Allâh describes the confusion of the Quraysh in the next verse:

﴿ بَلْ عَجِبُوٓا۟ أَن جَآءَهُم مُّنذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ ﴾ [ق: ٢]

"They marvel that a warner has arisen from among them." (50:2)

The Quraysh also rejected the idea that mortals could be inspired by Allâh. Allâh contradicted this assumption in the following verse:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ أَنزَلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ ٱلَّذِى جَآءَ بِهِۦ مُوسَىٰ نُورًا وَهُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ﴾ [الأنعام: ٩١]

"Ask them: Who then revealed the Book that Moses brought, a source of light and guidance for mankind?" (6:91)

Numerous parallels are mentioned in the Qur'ân in which a nation refused to follow a prophet because he was of flesh and blood:

﴿إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا﴾ [إبراهيم: ١٠]

"You are no more than a man like us." (14:10)

The Qur'ân depicts the prophets as replying to their detractors:

﴿إِن نَّحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَآءُ﴾ [إبراهيم: ١١]

"True, we are men like you, but Allâh gives His blessings to whomever He pleases." (14:11)

All of Allâh's prophets and messengers, then, were mere mortals, and Muhammad ﷺ was no exception. Allâh did not send angels as messengers because mortals would not be able to follow in the footsteps of a supernatural being. The role of Allâh's messengers was not only to communicate Allâh's message to mankind, but also to show mortals how to apply this divine message in an earthly, human setting. Who could perform such a task better than a mortal messenger could? If Allâh had sent angels as messengers, the polytheists would have been justified in asking, 'How can we imitate supernatural beings?" This divine wisdom is expressed in the following verse as well:

﴿وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَٰهُ مَلَكًا لَّجَعَلْنَٰهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِم مَّا يَلْبِسُونَ﴾ [الأنعام: ٩]

"And had We sent him an angel, We would have given him the form of a man. This would have confused them even more." (6:9)

Now, since the polytheists admitted that Ibraheem, Isma'eel and Musa عليه السلام were all prophets as well as men, they could no longer

challenge Muhammad's prophethood arguing that he was human. Therefore, they then ridiculed the idea that Allâh would appoint a once-destitute orphan as His prophet. Why would Allâh pass over more dignified men of the Quraysh or Thaqif tribes?

﴿لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَٰذَا ٱلْقُرْءَانُ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنَ ٱلْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ﴾ [الزخرف: ٣١]

"Why was not this Qur'ân revealed to someone of great importance from either (Makkah or Tâ'if)?" (43:31)

Allâh's reply to their question was succinct:

﴿أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ﴾ [الزخرف: ٣٢]

"Will they determine how to distribute the Mercy of your Lord?" (43:32)

The Qur'ân, prophethood, inspiration—all are part of Allâh's Mercy, and He alone decides how it should be distributed:

﴿ٱللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُۥ﴾ [الأنعام: ١٢٤]

"Allâh knows best who should receive His Message." (6:124)

Unable to question Allâh's right to bless whomever He wished with prophethood, the polytheists now developed a different argument to discredit Muhammad ﷺ. Kings, they pointed out, are surrounded by splendor and vast wealth, and only the most honorable dignitaries are allowed in their presence. Such kings are aided by the wisest advisors, and have hundreds of servants, bodyguards, and wives. How was it, they asked, that Muhammad ﷺ, the emissary of Allâh, was forced to wander about in the market place in order to earn his bread?

﴿وَقَالُوا۟ . . . لَوْلَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونَ مَعَهُۥ نَذِيرًا ۝ أَوْ يُلْقَىٰٓ إِلَيْهِ كَنزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُۥ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا ۚ وَقَالَ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُورًا﴾ [الفرقان: ٧-٨]

"They say: ' ...Why doesn't an angel descend from the

> heavens to accompany him while he admonishes us? Or, why hasn't a great treasure been bestowed upon him, or a garden that he can eat from?' The unjust among them say, 'You follow none but a man who is possessed!' " (25:7,8)

The polytheists argued that Muhammad, if he were indeed a prophet sent by Allâh, should resemble a royal dignitary. Where were his palaces? His wealth? His royal entourage? He did not have even the companionship of a single angel to help him with his preaching!

The Prophet ﷺ, however, saw his mission in quite different terms. He was sent to deliver Allâh's message to all people—rich and poor, strong and weak, free and enslaved. If he put on the airs of a king, he would not be able to reach the majority of his audience. The objectives of his mission required him to live as an ordinary human being, to show people that Islam was compatible with everyday life, and that it was not merely a tool to entertain kings, theologians and philosophers. The Qur'ân refuted the expectations of the polytheists by using one word to describe his status that Muhammad was a Messenger.

It might seem a little strange to us that the Quraysh would turn so viciously on one of their own. What was so unacceptable about what Muhammad ﷺ preached? At the root of all the conflicts between Muhammad ﷺ and the polytheists was the concept of monotheism (*Tawheed*), which the polytheists had corrupted into its antithesis, idolatry. At the same time, they accepted some of the components of monotheism. For example, they accepted the fact that Allâh is one in His personal self, attributes and actions. The polytheists also agreed with the Prophet ﷺ on the following points: Allâh is the sole Creator of the universe, He is the Lord and Provider of all living beings, He alone gives and takes life, and it is He Who makes independent decisions which no one can challenge.

However, hand in hand with their belief in Allâh's supremacy was their belief that certain individuals held special powers

granted by Allâh. These individuals, the polytheists claimed, could perform many miraculous feats, such as healing the sick and causing barren women to conceive. Some were believed to act as intermediaries—when people prayed to them, these beings supposedly relayed the prayers to Allâh!

The polytheists, then, strove to please such people who supposedly held high-ranking stations close to Allâh. By pleasing these demigods, they reasoned, one could please Allâh. The people conceived many ways to please these "friends of Allâh." For example, it was a common practice to build shrines over the graves of "saints" and "holy men." People would visit these monuments with the belief that by rubbing the walls of the shrine, or by walking around it several times, they would earn the favor of the person in whose honor it had been built. Some even made offerings of produce, goods, gold, and animal sacrifice. These offerings would be given to the shrine attendants, who would then place the objects before the graves or idols. Generally, nothing could be offered directly without the aid of the attendants.

However, animals were presented as offerings in a number of ways. Sometimes worshipers would leave the animals free in the name of some "holy man" in order to seek his pleasure. These animals would graze and roam about at will, revered by the people. Sometimes they carried the animal to the home of the "holy man" and had it slaughtered there. This, however, was done in the name of the "holy man."

The polytheists would also organize a fair once or twice a year at shrines dedicated to certain individuals at which people gathered and performed the acts of worship and adoration mentioned above. Such fairs were often scheduled around the death anniversaries of these saints, and people would journey long distances to attend these gatherings.

All these acts of worship and adoration were performed in hopes of pleasing the dead "holy men," and winning their intercession.

The pagans would address certain saints saying, “O father! Answer my request, and remove such and such hardship.” The polytheists believed that the dead people that they prayed to could not only hear them, but could also answer their prayers with powers given to them by Allâh, or by interceding with Allâh.

Such were the practices of the pagans — associating partners with Allâh by deifying human beings and inanimate objects even as they denied His power to resurrect His creation. It was in this citadel of polytheism that the Prophet ﷺ was sent to preach the message of the One God, and to teach people of His Oneness. Many of the polytheists, however, viewed the message as unreasonable and untrue, and they clung to their own flawed beliefs about the nature of God.

﴿ أَجَعَلَ ٱلْآلِهَةَ إِلَٰهًا وَٰحِدًا ۖ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَشَيْءٌ عُجَابٌ ۝ . . . مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَٰذَا فِي ٱلْمِلَّةِ ٱلْآخِرَةِ إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا ٱخْتِلَٰقٌ ﴾ [ص: ٥-٧]

> “Has he made all of the gods into one god? This is something strange! ... We have not heard of any religion that has only one god. Surely, this is nothing but an innovation!” (38:5-7)

Allâh engages in debate with the pagans through the verses of the Qur’ân. The pagans were asked how they could tell whether or not a person had been chosen by Allâh and actually possessed the power of intercession. For example, how could one be sure that a person who claimed to be “close” to Allâh was telling the truth? Essentially, there are only two ways to determine whether or not such an individual was telling the truth: by possessing knowledge of the unseen, or by having access to a divine book.

Allâh addresses this point in the Qur’ân when He asks:

﴿ أَمْ عِندَهُمُ ٱلْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ ﴾ [القلم: ٤٧]

> “Does the unseen appear before them so that they can record it in their own books?” (68:47)

﴿ ٱئْتُونِي بِكِتَٰبٍ مِّن قَبْلِ هَٰذَآ أَوْ أَثَٰرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴾
[الأحقاف: ٤]

"If you speak the truth, bring me a book revealed before this one, or some traces of knowledge to support your claim." (46:4)

And:

﴿ قُلْ هَلْ عِندَكُم مِّنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَآ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا ٱلظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴾ [الأنعام: ١٤٨]

"Say: Do you have any proof that you can bring before us? No, because you follow nothing but conjecture and your words are only lies." (6:148)

The polytheists admitted that they did not have knowledge of the unseen, nor could they produce a divinely inspired book. Tradition and the wisdom of their ancestors were their sources of truth.

The Qur'ân quotes them as saying:

﴿ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَآ ءَابَآءَنَا عَلَىٰٓ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰٓ ءَاثَٰرِهِم مُّقْتَدُونَ ﴾ [الزخرف: ٢٣]

"We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we are following in their footsteps." (43:23)

These verses highlight the ignorance and helplessness of the polytheists, and Allâh makes the matter clear when He says in the Qur'ân:

﴿ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴾ [النحل: ٧٤]

"Truly, Allâh knows, but you know not." (16:74)

Referring to saints and intercessors, Allâh leaves no doubt about their status:

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ فَٱدْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا۟ لَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَٰدِقِينَ ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٩٤]

"Verily, those whom you pray to besides Allâh are servants like you. So call upon them and let them answer, if you speak the truth." (7:194)

Allâh challenges those who still insist there are individuals with special powers who can answer prayers. In verse after verse, Allâh emphasizes the futility of praying to any one other than Him:

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِۦ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِن قِطْمِيرٍ ﴾ [فاطر: ١٣]

"Those whom you pray to other than Allâh do not even possess a *Qitmeer* [the thin membrane that covers a date stone]." (35: 13)

﴿ إِن تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا۟ دُعَآءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا۟ مَا ٱسْتَجَابُوا۟ لَكُمْ ۖ وَيَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَـٰمَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ ۚ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ ﴾ [فاطر: ١٤]

"If you pray to them, they will not hear you. Moreover, even if they did hear you, they could not answer your prayers. Then, on the Day of Judgment, they will deny that they asked you to worship them. Who can inform you of these things better than Allâh, He Who knows all things?" (35:14)

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ۝ أَمْوَٰتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَآءٍ ۖ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴾ [النحل: ٢٠-٢١]

"Those whom they pray to other than Allâh have not created a single thing. In fact, they themselves were created. Dead, utterly lifeless, they know not when they will be raised up." (16:20-21)

And:

﴿ أَيُشْرِكُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْـًٔا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ۝ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا وَلَآ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَنصُرُونَ ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٩١-١٩٢]

"Do they associate partners with Allâh that cannot create anything, partners that were created themselves? These partners cannot help those who pray to them, nor can they even help themselves!" (7:191-192)

The polytheists who lived during the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ agreed with him that Allâh created everything, and that the gods they worshiped created nothing. How was it then, Allâh asks them in the Qur'ân, that they worshiped something that had been created instead of worshiping the One who created everything?

The polytheists answered this by claiming that their ancestors had all prayed to other gods besides Allâh. These ancestors, and the Prophet Muhammad's ancestors were among them, who had believed in the power of such gods. In addition, was it not true, they asked, that their ancestors were known for their wisdom and intelligence? How, then, could one question their religion?

Allâh answers their argument in the Qur'ân by challenging their ancestors' wisdom in matters of religion. He characterizes them as misguided and incapable of understanding, as seen in the following verses.

﴿ إِنَّهُمْ أَلْفَوْا۟ ءَابَآءَهُمْ ضَآلِّينَ ○ فَهُمْ عَلَىٰٓ ءَاثَٰرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُونَ ﴾ [الصافات: ٦٩-٧٠]

> "They found their fathers on the wrong path, so they hastily followed their footsteps." (37:69-70)

Besides insisting on the wisdom of their polytheistic forefathers, the polytheists accused the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims of disrespect to their gods and threatened them with the wrath of these false deities.

﴿ إِن نَّقُولُ إِلَّا ٱعْتَرَىٰكَ بَعْضُ ءَالِهَتِنَا بِسُوٓءٍ ۗ ﴾ [هود: ٥٤]

> "We say that some of our gods have inflicted you with madness!" (11:54)

In answer to these weak threats, Allâh reminds the idolaters of the absolute powerlessness of their gods. Motionless, mute and defenseless, how could these effigies harm the Muslims or destroy them?

﴿ أَلَهُمْ أَرْجُلٌ يَمْشُونَ بِهَآ ۖ أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبْطِشُونَ بِهَآ ۖ أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَآ ۖ أَمْ

﴿لَهُمْ ءَاذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۗ قُلِ ٱدْعُوا۟ شُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُونِ فَلَا تُنظِرُونِ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٩٥]

"Have they feet to walk with? Hands to grasp with? Eyes to see with? Ears to hear with? Say: Call upon those you claim to be Allâh's partners and then plot against me, and give me no respite!" (7:195)

Allâh sets forth a parable, saying:

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَٱسْتَمِعُوا۟ لَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ لَن يَخْلُقُوا۟ ذُبَابًا وَلَوِ ٱجْتَمَعُوا۟ لَهُۥ ۖ وَإِن يَسْلُبْهُمُ ٱلذُّبَابُ شَيْـًٔا لَّا يَسْتَنقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۚ ضَعُفَ ٱلطَّالِبُ وَٱلْمَطْلُوبُ﴾ [الحج: ٧٣]

"O people! A parable will be set before you, so listen to it carefully. Those whom you call upon and pray to besides Allâh cannot create even a fly, even if they all gathered for this purpose. And if a fly should snatch anything from them, they would not be able to recover what the fly had taken from them. How feeble is the petitioner! How feeble the petitioned!" (22:73)

Some of the Muslims, tired of the insults to their faith, derided the helplessness of the pagan gods, as in this taunt about an idol that could not defend itself against animal excrement: "A god that lets foxes urinate over his head is certainly weak and base."

Incensed, the polytheists heaped abuse on the Muslims as well as their Lord. The degeneration of a profound spiritual conflict into puerile name-calling was stopped when Allâh forbade the Muslims to indulge in petty slurs, saying:

﴿وَلَا تَسُبُّوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا۟ ٱللَّهَ عَدْوًۢا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ﴾ [المائدة: ١٠٨]

"Do not insult those who worship false gods lest they ignorantly insult Allâh in return." (6:108)

As we have seen, every argument forwarded by the polytheists was refuted by Allâh himself, while His Prophet ﷺ went about preaching his message undeterred by their ridicule and abuse.

Realizing the futility of verbal debates and disputes, the polytheists considered using force against Islam to deter people from the path of Allâh. The notables and chieftains of each tribe began to ill-treat the Muslims among them, and a delegation of theirs approached Abu Talib. They demanded that he stop the Prophet ﷺ from preaching.

Persecution had begun in earnest, and several Muslim lives would be lost to the wrath of the Quraysh. Torture, exile and poverty were what the Quraysh promised, while Paradise and Allâh's Grace were the rewards promised by Allâh and His Prophet ﷺ. Was it surprising that despite physical limitations, the early Muslims chose to trade their earthly lots for the Hereafter?

Persecution begins

The persecution of the Muslims was a terrible phase in early Islam. There were numerous heart-rending incidents in which Muslims were tortured and often killed by the Quraysh. The collective memories of the early Muslim community catalogued the injuries and casualties suffered by its members, and in this biography of the Prophet of Islam it is fitting that we mention the lives and deaths of his most ardent followers, those who recognized the truth of his message and died believing in Allâh and His Messenger.

Bilal bin Rabah رضي الله عنه was the slave of Umayya bin Khalaf. Incensed at his slave's assertion of spiritual independence, Umayya would hand him over to the street urchins after tying a rope around his neck. As they would drag him, Bilal would reiterate "One! One!" in reference to the Oneness of God. Umayya would also bring Bilal out at noon and throw him on his back on the burning sand or stone with a heavy rock on his chest. Then he would say to Bilal, "Now, by God, you will lie here till you either die or deny Muhammad and worship Lat and Uzza." Bilal endured the affliction, reaffirming his faith in Allâh by calling out, "One! One!"

Finally, the torture ended when Abu Bakr ﷺ saw Bilal as he was

passing by. His wealth was now a tool with which to earn Allâh's pleasure, and he purchased Bilal and freed him.

Amir bin Fuhayrah ﷺ was another early believer who endured beatings so merciless that he lost his senses and did not know what he was saying.

Aflah ﷺ, also known as Abu Faqih, was the slave of Banu Abdul Dar. He was usually taken out in the scorching heat at noon in fetters and forced to lie naked, with a heavy stone on his chest. Often the agony rendered him insensible. On one occasion, the pagans tied a rope around his feet and neck and dragged him about until he nearly died. He was finally rescued by Abu Bakr ﷺ, who, unable to see a fellow Muslim suffer so, bought him out of bondage. Aflah was among the early Muslims who later migrated to Abyssinia.

Khabbab ibn Al-Aratt ﷺ, a well-known Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, was bought by a woman of Banu Khuzaa named Umm Anmar bint Sabaa'. He was a blacksmith, and to make Khabbab renounce his belief in the Prophet ﷺ, Umm Anmar would brand him on the back with his own tools. Others would also join in the torture. They would twist his neck, pull out his hair, and even throw him on burning coals. A rock would be placed on him so that he could not move. Miraculously, Khabbab's faith grew stronger with each attempt to drive him back to disbelief.

Zinira رضي الله عنها was a Roman slave girl who embraced Islam. When the pagans found out that she had become Muslim, they tortured her until she went blind, and gloated that the wrath of their gods Lat and Uzza had caused her to go blind. It was Allâh Who had blinded her, she told them, and if He so willed, He could restore her eyesight. The next morning she awoke to find her vision completely restored. Her tormentors, however, were not convinced of the miracle and claimed this was nothing more than Muhammad's sorcery.

Umm Abis رضي الله عنها was a slave of Banu Zahra. She suffered at the hands of her master, Malik Aswad bin Abd Yaghuth, who began to torture her when she accepted Islam. Malik was a sworn enemy of the Prophet ﷺ and used to ridicule him relentlessly.

A slave of Amr bin Mu'mil from Banu Adiy embraced Islam. Her torturer was none other than Umar bin Khattab, who at that point was still an unbeliever. Umar, famous for his strength, would beat her until he was exhausted. He would then stop, informing her that he was stopping not out of mercy, but out of fatigue. "Your Lord will also treat you accordingly," retorted the slave girl.

Among the slaves who embraced Islam were also Nahdiya and her daughter رضي الله عنهما. These two were the slaves of a woman of Banu Abdul Dar. Mother and daughter suffered punishment on account of their faith until Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه bought them from their mistress and set them free, just as he had done with Bilal, Amir bin Fuhayrah and Abu Faqih رضي الله عنهم. His use of his wealth in this manner earned him reproof from his father, Abu Quhafa, who told him, "I notice that you are freeing weak heads. Had you freed strong men, they would stand you in good stead." In reply, Abu Bakr said, "I seek but the pleasure of Allâh." Through the following verses that were revealed, Allâh indicated that Abu Bakr had succeeded in his undertaking:

﴿ فَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ نَارًا تَلَظَّىٰ ۝ لَا يَصْلَىٰهَآ إِلَّا ٱلْأَشْقَى ۝ ٱلَّذِى كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ۝ وَسَيُجَنَّبُهَا ٱلْأَتْقَى ۝ ٱلَّذِى يُؤْتِى مَالَهُۥ يَتَزَكَّىٰ ۝ وَمَا لِأَحَدٍ عِندَهُۥ مِن نِّعْمَةٍ تُجْزَىٰٓ ۝ إِلَّا ٱبْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ ۝ وَلَسَوْفَ يَرْضَىٰ ﴾ [الليل: ١٤-٢١]

"I warn you all of a fire blazing fiercely. None shall enter it except the most wretched, those who deny and turn away. However, the God-fearing will be saved from the fire, those who spend their wealth in order to purify themselves, who spend without seeking a reward in return. They seek only the countenance of their Lord, the Most High. Verily, soon they will be pleased." (92:14-21)

Not all the slaves who became Muslim were ransomed. Some succumbed to their injuries, while others were forced to recant in public although they remained believers at heart. Ammar bin Yasir and his parents belonged to the Banu Makhzoom tribe, of which Abu Jahl was a chieftain. Led by Abu Jahl, various people from the tribe would take Ammar and his family to Abtah and leave them in the scorching sun. The Prophet ﷺ saw their plight and exhorted them to stand fast in faith, saying "Patience, O family of Yasir, patience. Your destination is Paradise. O Allâh! Forgive the family of Yasir." And stand fast they did. Yasir, Ammar's father, bore the torture until his death.

Sumayyah bint Khayyat, رضي الله عنها the mother of Ammar, was a slave of Abu Hudhayfah Makhzoomi. This frail old woman died and attained the honor of being the first martyr in Islam when Abu Jahl struck a lance at her genitals.

As for Ammar, the torture became unbearable for him. The polytheists would make him wear a coat of mail and put a heavy red stone on his chest. Overpowered by distress, he uttered whatever the polytheists bade him say. However, at heart he remained full of faith. Ammar was remorseful at his body's betrayal of his heart and soul. With the revelation of the following verse, however, Ammar and all the believers were heartened, for Allâh assured them that He looked at believing hearts, not at tongues weakened by torture:

﴿ مَن كَفَرَ بِٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ إِيمَـٰنِهِۦٓ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُۥ مُطْمَئِنٌّۢ بِٱلْإِيمَـٰنِ وَلَـٰكِن مَّن شَرَحَ بِٱلْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

[النحل: ١٠٦]

> "Those who renounce faith in Allâh and open their hearts to disbelief—except for those believers who are forced to recant outwardly—will earn Allâh's wrath and a great punishment." (16:106)

While some form of hostility from the community at large was

only to be expected, it was strange that even the immediate families of the new Muslims joined in the persecution. Love vanished in the face of allegiance to their idols. When Mus'ab bin Umayr ﵁ accepted Islam, his privileged lifestyle ended. His mother refused to give him food and drink and turned him out of her house. Defenseless and shunned by the one who had given birth to him, he was brutally tortured, and his skin was peeled off like the slough of a snake by his tormentors.

Suhayb bin Sinan Rumi ﵁ was another Muslim who was tortured to the extent that he lost control over what he said, and babbled anything his tormentors had him utter.

In the eyes of the Quraysh, slaves who became Muslim were rebels to be tortured to death. Their low social status left them vulnerable to all kinds of abuse. Nevertheless, not even wealth and social standing guaranteed complete immunity to anyone who became Muslim. Uthman bin Affan ﵁ was a well-to-do person in the community, but he too was tortured in various ways. Once his uncle wrapped him up tightly in a mat and burned incense from below.

Abu Bakr and Talha bin Ubaydullah رضي الله عنهما were also harassed. Naufal bin Khuwaylid, and, it is said, Uthman bin Ubaydullah, trussed both of them with the same rope so that they could not pray and practice their new faith. However, both Abu Bakr and Talha were found praying, the rope having been mysteriously untied. Since both of them had been fastened with the same rope, they came to be called Qarayn, which means "joined together."

Abu Jahl, who is referred to several times in the Qur'ân for his implacable hatred of Islam and his arrogance, was one of the prominent Makkans who had made it his mission to fight Islam and its followers. His hate and ire grew every time he heard of someone becoming Muslim. If the new Muslim held a high position in society, Abu Jahl would rebuke him and threaten him with the loss of property and honor. If someone from a lower

station accepted Islam, Abu Jahl would beat him severely and incite others to do the same. As a general policy, the polytheists persecuted any new Muslim, often to the point of death, especially if the convert belonged to a weaker section of tribal society. If, however, they saw a prominent person accept Islam, they proceeded more cautiously, as only polytheists of the same social status could challenge the convert.

Polytheists avoid openly abusing the Prophet ﷺ

Because the Prophet ﷺ had enjoyed great prestige and belonged to a highly respected tribe, his opponents did not dare mistreat him the way they did the slave converts to Islam. In addition to being from a noble tribe, he also enjoyed the protection of his uncle, Abu Talib, who was venerated as a great chieftain. Abu Talib was a towering personality from Banu Abdu Munaf, a family that had gained the respect of not only the Quraysh, but also the whole of Arabia. The people of Makkah held him in high esteem and no one would even think of dishonoring him by harming his nephew. For these reasons, the pagans had to be quite careful in how they opposed the Prophet ﷺ.

They decided to hold talks with Abu Talib—talks in which they would hint at what might befall Muhammad if he continued opposing their religion.

Talks between Abu Talib and the Quraysh

After considerable thought as to strategy, some nobles of the Quraysh came to Abu Talib and said to him, "Your nephew speaks ill of our gods, casts blame on our religion, calls us ignorant and frivolous, and denounces our fathers as depraved and misguided. Either you stop him, or cut him off so that we can deal with him."

Abu Talib answered them mildly and let them leave without an altercation. Muhammad ﷺ, however, continued to proclaim himself Allâh's Prophet, and continued to call on all to embrace Islam.

The Quraysh challenge Abu Talib

Soon the Quraysh realized that Abu Talib was not going to ask his nephew to stop his rebellious preaching. They could no longer keep silent, and eventually they all came together to plan their response to the situation.

Afterwards, they again met with Abu Talib, and this time their words were not so honeyed. They warned him sternly, "O Abu Talib, you are old and we hold you in high esteem. We asked you to restrain your nephew, but you did nothing. By God, we cannot tolerate this any longer—our fathers are denounced, we are called ignorant, and our gods are insulted. Either you stop him, or we will fight you both until one side perishes."

Abu Talib felt the sting of these belligerent words. The polytheists of Makkah had challenged him, and he took the threat seriously. He sent for the Prophet ﷺ and told him of what the men of the Quraysh had said. "Have mercy on me and yourself," he told his nephew, "and do not impose on me a burden greater than I can bear."

When the Prophet ﷺ heard what Abu Talib had to say, he replied: "O my uncle, I swear by Allâh, if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left and ask me to abandon this mission, I would not turn from it until Allâh made me victorious or I perished therein."

Witnessing Muhammad's resolve, Abu Talib unhesitatingly offered his nephew his full support. "Come back, my nephew! Go where you please and say what you will. By God, I will never turn away from you, come what may."

The Quraysh make Abu Talib a strange proposal

The Quraysh saw that their threats and challenges had been ignored. Muhammad ﷺ was still preaching a doctrine that defamed their gods and the customs of their ancestors. They also found that Abu Talib was not about to abandon his nephew in the

face of threats. Instead, he seemed to be prepared to fight the entire tribe in order to protect him.

The Quraysh considered the immense potential danger of the situation. Muhammad ﷺ was popular among the people of Makkah, although he represented a threat to their way of life. They held more meetings to try to come up with ways to deal with him. At last, they decided to make Abu Talib a proposal.

The idea revolved around Ammarah bin Waleed, a handsome young boy from the Quraysh tribe. They took him to Abu Talib and said, "O, Abu Talib! Take this youth from us and treat him as your own son. Give him your complete support. In exchange for him, give us your nephew—a young man who has challenged the ways of your forefathers and caused disputes among the Makkans, denouncing them as ignorant men who have deviated from the straight path. We shall then put him to death. After all, we are giving you one man in exchange of another."

Abu Talib could only respond to such a ridiculous idea with sarcasm. "By God, you are offering me a very bad bargain. You are giving me your son so that I can feed him lavishly, and asking for my son so that you may kill him! By God, it will never happen."

Persecution of the Prophet ﷺ

When neither threats nor bargains proved successful in swaying Abu Talib, the Quraysh decided to persecute the Prophet ﷺ. Simultaneously, they intensified their campaign against the believers.

Because of the Prophet's high position in Makkan society, only those of like standing dared mistreat him. Those who harassed the Prophet ﷺ in his own house were Abu Lahab, Hakam bin Abi Al-As bin Umayya, Uqba bin Abi Mu'ayt, Adiy bin Hamra Thaqafi, Ibn Al-Asda Hadhab—all of whom were his neighbors. When the Prophet ﷺ bowed down in prayer, someone threw the fetus of a camel on his back. Others would throw similar filth at his door.

The Prophet ﷺ would remove it with a piece of wood and say, "O Banu Abdu Munaf! What kind of neighborhood is this?"

Whenever Umayya bin Khalaf saw the Prophet ﷺ, he would taunt him before the people of Makkah. Similarly, his brother, Abi bin Khalaf, crumbled a rotten bone and threw it in the face of the Prophet ﷺ. He would also say to the Prophet ﷺ: " O Muhammad, I have a horse named Ud, and I feed it three heaps of food so that I can kill you while upon its back!" One day the Prophet ﷺ answered his challenge by saying, "No, it is I who will kill you." The Prophet's words came true when he killed Abi during the Battle of Uhud.

On another occasion, Uqba bin Abi Mu'ayt sat beside the Prophet ﷺ listening to him. When Abi bin Khalaf found out that his friend Uqba had been with the Prophet ﷺ, he chided him for that and then said to Uqba, "Go and spit in the face of Muhammad." Ever mindful that allegiance to the tribe came before even honor and decency, Uqba rose from his seat, approached the Prophet ﷺ, and spat in his face.

Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle, who had freed a slave to celebrate his nephew's birth, became his sworn enemy from the day he heard his nephew call the people to Islam from atop Mount Safa. The two sons of Abu Lahab, Utbah and Atiba, had married the Prophet's daughters, Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthoom, respectively. Abu Lahab ordered both his sons to divorce their wives, threatening never to see them again if they refused. His wife, Umm Jameel Ardi bint Harb, also asked them to divorce their wives for they had become "disbelievers." Utbah and Atiba obeyed their parents and divorced the Prophet's daughters.

Umm Jameel was no less vicious in her enmity. Her nephew by marriage was posturing as a messenger, daring to oppose the gods she held dear. She resolved to punish him. She used to scatter prickly bits of wood over the path that the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions would pass.

When Umm Jameel heard that a short chapter of the Qur'ân (*Surah Abu Lahab*) had been revealed to the Prophet ﷺ which condemned her to Hell for this very act, she began searching for him, armed with a rock. He was sitting near the *Ka'bah* along with Abu Bakr ﷺ. She strode up to Abu Bakr ﷺ and asked him, "Where has your companion gone? I have come to know that he speaks ill of me. By God, if I find him I shall hurl this stone at his face. Look, I am also a poet." She then uttered the following verses and went away:

> We disobeyed the blameworthy, rejected his call, and renounced his religion with disdain.

Abu Bakr ﷺ was amazed that Umm Jameel had not seen the Prophet ﷺ sitting right beside him. "O Prophet! Did she fail to see you?"

He said, "Yes, she could not see me because Allâh seized her sight."

Meanwhile, the Quraysh invented a new way of abusing the Prophet ﷺ: they began calling him *Mudhammam* instead of Muhammad, the meaning of which is the opposite of his real name. "Muhammad" is one who is highly praised, while *Mudhammam* is one who is vehemently condemned. Allâh, however, protected the Prophet's honor by revealing that the Quraysh abused one known as *Mudhammam,* while the Prophet was "Muhammad" by name.

As has been mentioned earlier, one of the most adamant enemies of the Prophet ﷺ and his followers was Abu Jahl. His actual name was Abu Hakam, which literally means Father of Wisdom, but his behavior toward the Prophet ﷺ and the early Muslims earned him the title Abu Jahl, Father of Ignorance. Anyone who abandoned the local pagan religion for Islam was a renegade and Abu Jahl would take him to task for his treachery. He abused the Prophet ﷺ openly, and would attempt to obstruct the Prophet ﷺ from performing his prayers.

One day Abu Jahl saw the Prophet ﷺ performing his prayers and began harassing and threatening him as he prayed. At last the Prophet ﷺ caught hold of a piece of cloth around Abu Jahl's neck and, shaking him strongly, quoted these two verses from the Qur'ân:

﴿أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ ۝ ثُمَّ أَوْلَىٰ لَكَ فَأَوْلَىٰ﴾ [القيامة: ٣٤-٣٥]

> "Woe to you! Woe to you! Again, woe to you! Woe to you!" (75:34-35)

Abu Jahl shot back, "Muhammad! You are challenging me! By God, you and your Lord cannot do me any harm. I am the strongest man in this valley."

Eager for revenge, Abu Jahl asked his comrades, "Does Muhammad put his face on the earth in your presence?"

"Yes," they replied.

"By Lat and Uzza," Abu Jahl swore, "if I ever see him do so, I shall trample his face and neck into the dust." The day came when Abu Jahl saw the Prophet ﷺ performing his prayers, so he marched toward him with the intention of carrying out his threat. Suddenly, onlookers saw him retreat before reaching the defenseless Muhammad ﷺ, his arms clawing at the air.

"What happened, Abu Hakam?" the people asked.

"A trench of fire and a screen of devastation stood between him and me," the dazed Abu Jahl replied.

The Prophet ﷺ remarked to his followers, "Had he come near me, the angels would have swooped down upon every limb of his."

Uqba bin Abi Mu'ayt was another who earned eternal disgrace for his despicable treatment of the Prophet ﷺ. Once the Prophet was praying near the *Ka'bah* while Abu Jahl and his comrades

were sitting nearby. Meanwhile, Abu Jahl asked the others, "Is there one who will bring the innards of a camel of Banu so-and-so and place it on Muhammad's back while he is prostrating in prayer?" Uqba, anxious to prove his daring, got up and returned with the intestines of a slaughtered camel. He stayed to the side until he saw the opportunity to catch the Prophet ﷺ in prostration. When the Prophet ﷺ bowed his head to the earth, Uqba laid the camel intestines on the Prophet's neck and shoulders.

Abu Jahl and his followers burst into laughter, but the Prophet ﷺ remained in prostration and did not raise his head. Someone informed the Prophet's daughter, Fatimah, who then came running to the *Ka'bah*. She removed the foul-smelling intestines from her father's back, and he raised his head and prayed to Allâh: "O Allâh! Seize the Quraysh!" When Abu Jahl and his comrades heard Muhammad's prayer, they felt a very heavy weight on their hearts because they believed that in Makkah, all prayers were granted.

The Prophet ﷺ continued to pray aloud in front of his enemies, mentioning each one by name and asking Allâh to avenge him.

The Quraysh were right about their misgivings regarding the Prophet's prayer for retribution, for Allâh soon answered it. In the Battle of Badr, which was the first battle the Muslims fought against the Makkan pagans, each person the Prophet ﷺ mentioned in his prayer fell on the battlefield.

It seemed as if the enemies of Islam far outnumbered the followers of the Prophet ﷺ. All the notables, with the exception of a discerning, fortunate few like Abu Bakr and Uthman رضي الله عنهما, used their wealth and power to persecute the Prophet ﷺ. Besides Abu Jahl, the five prominent persons who used to ridicule the Prophet ﷺ were Waleed bin Mugheera Makhzoomi, Aswad bin Abd Yaghuth Zuhri, Abu Zam'a Aswad bin Abdul Muttalib Asadi, Harith bin Qays Khuzai, and As bin Wa'il

Sahmi. The Prophet did not take revenge even once during the many years he lived in Makkah after he began his mission. He was content with Allâh's promise that He Himself would deal with his opponents and detractors. In the end, Muhammad's harshest enemies met with agonizing deaths.

Waleed bin Mugheera was merely scratched by an arrow, and he thought nothing of it. The angel Jibreel, however, pointed towards the scratch and it became inflamed. The wound plagued Waleed for many years until he finally died.

Likewise, Jibreel pointed towards the head of Aswad bin Abd Yaghuth and he developed boils that caused his death. Another source states that these boils resulted from sunstroke that Jibreel had inflicted on him. According to yet another narration, Jibreel pointed towards Aswad's belly and he developed dropsy that caused his belly to swell so much that he died.

When Aswad bin Abdul Muttalib became excessive in his persecution of the Prophet ﷺ, the Prophet asked Allâh to "snatch" his eyesight and to deprive him of fatherhood. In response to his supplication, Jibreel was sent to strike his face with a thorny branch so that Aswad lost his eyesight. He then struck his son dead.

Harith bin Qays, the last of these five previously named opponents of the Prophet ﷺ, met a horrible death. As he lay dying, his stomach filled with yellow fluid, and the contents of his intestines began to flow from his nose.

Divine intervention and retribution came to those most active and vocal in their hatred of Islam, but for the most part, the Prophet quietly endured all the hardships, just as prophets before him had done. Looking at his patience and unshakable faith, the believers were heartened during their sufferings in the cause of Allâh. Verbal abuse and physical threats continued, so the Prophet ﷺ devised ways of defense. He took two steps to help secure the fledgling Muslims.

Dar Al-Arqam

First, the Prophet ﷺ began using the house of Arqam bin Abi Al-Arqam as a secret center for prayer, preaching, education and training. Arqam's house was ideally located at the foot of Mount Safa, only a short walk from the *Ka'bah* and its bustling crowds. The pagans who lived in the area, therefore, did not take notice of the many people who gathered in Arqam's house.

The Prophet ﷺ would meet his Companions there and recite verses of the Qur'ân to them which they would then memorize. These arrangements allowed the early Muslims to learn the essential tenets of Islam and perform prayers in secret without incurring the wrath of their neighbors or other family members who had not converted.

As for the Prophet ﷺ, he continued to perform his prayers in the open for all to see. In the face of persecution, insults, and harassment, he kept preaching the message of Islam to everyone he met. It was the wisdom and mercy of Allâh that the Prophet never refrained from carrying on with his mission, even under extremely adverse conditions. Because of his efforts, no soul will be able to argue on the Day of Judgment that Allâh did not send a messenger to warn those who were astray and to show them the straight path.

Migration to Abyssinia

The next step the Prophet ﷺ took was aimed at preserving the Muslim community from increasing belligerence. He had heard much about the King of Abyssinia, who was known to be a just Christian ruler, one who would allow no persecution in his land. The Prophet ﷺ directed the Muslim community to migrate to Abyssinia and to take shelter there.

The first batch of Muslims migrated in the month of Rajab, five years after Muhammad ﷺ had become a Prophet. Twelve men and four women made the journey across the Red Sea. Uthman

bin Affan ﷺ was the leader of the group, accompanied by his wife, Ruqayyah, one of the Prophet's daughters. Their voluntary exile marked the first instance of a family migrating for religious reasons since the time of Ibraheem and Lut عليهما السلام (Lot).

Late one night the small group of immigrants slipped out of Makkah and made their way to Sha'iba, a port south of Jeddah. Fortunately, two cargo ships were present there. The group boarded a ship and sailed to Abyssinia. There they found the refuge they needed until Allâh made it safe for them to return to Makkah.

When the Quraysh found out that a group of Muslims had fled, they erupted in anger. They swiftly sent some men to bring them back to teach them such a lesson that they would recant their faith. However, the Quraysh reached the coast too late—the Muslims had already made their way out to sea. Tired and disappointed, the Quraysh returned to Makkah to begin plotting their next move.

Polytheists prostrate along with Muslims

About two months after the migration to Abyssinia, the Prophet ﷺ came to the *Ka'bah*. A large number of the Quraysh were present, and their chieftains and noblemen were sitting among them. The chapter (*Surah*) of the Qur'ân called *Al-Najm* had only recently been revealed to the Prophet ﷺ.

Suddenly the Prophet rose before the Quraysh and began reciting the verses of *Surah Al-Najm*. The Quraysh kept silent. No one there had ever heard such powerful words. They were bewildered: Muhammad, their sworn enemy, was standing before them reciting, and they were left powerless. No one could stand to make him stop, and none could even ridicule him. The Prophet ﷺ reached the closing verse and prostrated, putting his head to the ground in worship of Allâh, Lord of the universe:

﴿ فَٱسْجُدُوا۟ لِلَّهِ وَٱعْبُدُوا۟ ۩ ﴾ [القمر : ٦٢]

"Prostrate before Allâh and worship Him." (53:62)

Miraculously, all of the Quraysh were so overcome by the recitation that they prostrated along with him. Ibn Mas'ud ﷺ, a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, reported that one of the Quraysh present that day, Umayya bin Khalaf, "took a handful of dust and rubbed it on his forehead saying, 'This is enough for me.'" Ibn Mas'ud would later see Umayya killed during the Battle of Badr.

Return of the immigrants

News of how the Quraysh had prostrated after hearing the Prophet ﷺ recite verses from the Qur'ân reached the Muslims in Abyssinia. It was rumored that the Quraysh had accepted Islam. Joyfully they left Abyssinia and set sail for Arabia. Once they were just outside Makkah, however, they discovered that nothing had changed. The Quraysh were still opposed to Islam, and Makkah was still a hostile territory. Disappointed, some decided to return to Abyssinia, while others entered Makkah and found shelter with some sympathetic non-Muslims.

Second migration to Abyssinia

Their prostration at the close of *Surah Al-Najm* had left the Quraysh looking weak. This loss of strength had to be countered with increased hostility, or people would think they had become convinced of the truth of Muhammad's message. Therefore, they began to intensify their persecution of the Muslims. Furthermore, the Quraysh were growing jealous of the hospitality the King of Abyssinia had extended to the Muslim immigrants in his country. They resolved to match his kindness to the Muslims with hostility.

For reasons of safety, the Prophet ﷺ decided to again have a group of Muslims migrate to Abyssinia. Eighty-two or eighty-three men and eighteen women got themselves ready for the journey. This time, of course, it would not be easy for them to slip past the Quraysh, but they managed to flee Makkah without

their enemies noticing.

Quraysh attempt to extradite Muslims

The Quraysh found it difficult to accept the fact that a large group of Muslims had managed to escape their campaign of terror. Safe in Abyssinia, the Muslims now enjoyed the experience of not facing any opposition to their faith and way of life. The Quraysh, nonetheless, had a plan. They sent two of their very shrewd envoys, Amr bin Al-Aas and Abdullah bin Rabi'a, to Abyssinia to have the Muslims extradited back to Arabia.

According to the plan, the two representatives of the Quraysh first met the Abyssinian bishops and bribed them in order to gain access to the King. When they succeeded in getting an audience with him, they presented him with gifts from Arabia. Then they stated their case:

> "O King! Some foolish men from our city have taken refuge in your majesty's country. They have abandoned our religion, but rather than accepting your religion, they have invented one of their own. Their families, knowing of their delusions, have sent us to Your Majesty to bring them back home."

When they had made their plea to the King, the Abyssinian bishops stood and urged him to grant their request. The King, however, was a very fair judge. He said that he would allow both parties to make their statements before making a decision. The Muslim refugees were summoned to the King's court. Then the King questioned them why they had entered an unknown religion that had caused them to abandon their families and tribes.

Ja'far bin Abu Talib, the Prophet's cousin, rose on behalf of the Muslims and said:

> "O King! We were a nation steeped in ignorance. We worshipped idols, ate carrion and committed many abominations. We neglected our kin and mistreated our

> neighbors. The strong among us devoured the weak. We lived thus until Allâh raised among us a messenger, of whose noble lineage, truthfulness, honesty and purity we were all aware.
>
> "He invited us to acknowledge the Oneness of God, to worship Allâh, and to renounce the stones and idols our forefathers we used to venerate. He enjoined upon us to speak the truth, to keep our word, and to be kind and considerate to our relatives and neighbors. He forbade us to shed blood, to act wantonly, to lie and to deceive others. He forbade us to encroach upon the property of orphans or to vilify chaste women.
>
> "He commanded us to worship Allâh alone without associating anything with Him. He ordered us to pray, to fast, and to pay the poor their due. We acknowledged he was Allâh's messenger and believed in him. We followed him in whatever he brought from Allâh, and we worshipped only one God without associating anything with Him. We treated as unlawful what he forbade and embraced what he made lawful for us. At this, our people were estranged. They persecuted us, tried to seduce us from our faith and force us to return to idolatry, pressing us to return to the abominations we used to commit earlier. When they tortured us, ground us under their tyranny and stood between us and our religion, we fled to your country, choosing you above others for refuge. We have come here, O King, to your country seeking your protection. We hope that we shall not be dealt with unjustly."

The King listened patiently to Ja'far. Then he asked Ja'far if he could recite something that had been revealed to Muhammad ﷺ. Ja'far then recited the opening verses of *Surah Maryam*, named after Mary, the mother of Jesus. The King wept until tears flowed to his beard, and the bishops were also overcome. "Truthfully, this and what Jesus brought are from the same divine light."

Then turning to the envoys of the Quraysh, the King said, "You may go. By God, I shall never give them to you, nor will they be ill-treated."

The two envoys from the Quraysh now changed their tactics. The next day they returned to the King's court and made another attempt to convince the King to expel the Muslims from his country. Amr tried to incite the King against the Muslims. "O King! They assert a dreadful thing about Jesus which is too shameful to be repeated before you."

The King again summoned the Muslims to his court and questioned them about their belief regarding Jesus.

Ja'far bin Abi Talib replied:

> "We say about him that which our Prophet ﷺ has taught us. Jesus was a human being and Allâh's Prophet. He was a spirit and a word cast unto the blessed virgin Maryam."

The King took a straw from the ground and said:

> "By God, Jesus, the son of Mary, does not exceed what you have said by the length of this straw. Go and live in my territory in peace and security. Those who ill-treat you will be punished. I shall not give you any trouble even if I were offered a mountain of gold in exchange."

The King then ordered that all the gifts brought by the envoys from the Quraysh be returned. Having failed miserably, the two envoys left for Arabia in great shame.

Polytheists are outraged

The Quraysh were very angry about what had happened in Abyssinia. They had been mocked in the King's court, and the name of their tribe had been tarnished—all because of a small band of refugees. The Muslims, they determined, would pay for this with their blood.

Yet, how were they to be avenged for this humiliation? Abu

Talib was steadfast in his support for his nephew, no matter how hard the Quraysh tried to manipulate him. With his uncle's protection, the Prophet ﷺ continued with his mission. The Quraysh tried everything to destroy Islam: persecution, assassination, bribery, debate, and even compromise. Nothing worked.

More persecution of the Prophet ﷺ

The defeat the pagans suffered at the Abyssinian court gave them further cause to hate Islam. Naturally, they took out their frustrations on the Muslims who still lived in Makkah.

Once Atiba bin Abi Lahab, who at this point was divorced from the Prophet's daughter, Umm Kulthoom, came to the Prophet ﷺ and quoted a verse from *Surah Al-Najm* only to say, "I disbelieve in the one who revealed this verse." He reiterated that although the Quraysh had prostrated along with the Prophet ﷺ after a recitation of this *Surah*, they clung to their disbelief in the divine source of Muhammad's prophethood and of the revelations he received.

From this point onward, Atiba became a source of constant irritation for the Prophet ﷺ. He once tore the Prophet's clothes and spat in his face. "O Allâh," the Prophet ﷺ said in response, "set one of your dogs on him." Soon after that, Atiba went to Syria along with a caravan. When the caravan halted at Zarqaa, a lion began to circle them. Atiba panicked and cried, "By God, it will devour me, just as Muhammad prayed. I am in Syria and he is in Makkah, but he will still kill me."

When they went to sleep that night, the other members of the caravan let Atiba sleep in the middle. Despite this arrangement, the lion passed by the camels and other men and pounced on Atiba. It took his head in its jaws and killed him on the spot.

One enemy was vanquished. Others remained to plague the Prophet ﷺ. Uqba bin Abi Mu'ayt, who had placed the camel intestines on the Prophet's back, once saw the Prophet ﷺ praying

and waited for him to place his forehead on the ground. He then placed his foot on the Prophet's neck and pressed down with all his weight until the Prophet's eyes bulged.

Finally, when nothing seemed to deter the Prophet ﷺ from accomplishing his mission, the pagans began to think seriously about assassinating him. They were willing to do this although it could lead to great bloodshed. Abu Jahl rose before the Quraysh one day and proclaimed:

> "You all see that Muhammad is forever devoted to denouncing our forefathers, calling us ignorant and backward, and insulting our gods. Therefore, I give my word to Allâh that one day I shall lie in wait for him with a heavy stone. When he prostrates, I will crush his head. Following this you may save me or leave me at the mercy of Banu Abdu Munaf."

The people then assured him, "By God, we will never abandon you. Do whatever you like."

Abu Jahl was quick to take full advantage of his followers' loyalty. The next morning he found a heavy stone and waited for his victim to arrive. The Prophet ﷺ came to the *Ka'bah* as usual and began to perform his prayers.

Sitting in groups around the *Ka'bah*, the Quraysh eagerly waited for Abu Jahl to carry out his plan. Abu Jahl edged forward to where the Prophet ﷺ stood in prayer. However, just as he was about to close in on his victim, he suddenly turned and fled from the scene. The Quraysh grabbed Abu Jahl and found his face flushed, his eyes vacant, and his hands still gripping the stone. Eventually he calmed down and released the stone. The Quraysh said, "Abu Hakam! What happened to you?"

"I was going to carry out my promise," Abu Jahl explained, "but a camel appeared before me. By God, I have never seen such a skull, neck and teeth, and it was about to devour me."

The Prophet ﷺ later said that the vision Abu Jahl saw was actually Jibreel.

Others among the Quraysh, however, were undeterred by Abu Jahl's experience. When a group of Quraysh saw the Prophet ﷺ circumambulating the *Ka'bah* in worship, they began to make loud satirical remarks about him. Encouraged by the fact that he seemed hurt by these remarks, they insulted him again a second and third time. Finally the Prophet ﷺ stopped and, facing them, said: "O people of Quraysh! Do you hear? I swear by the One in Whose hands lies my life, I have come to you with a great slaughter."

The Prophet's words weighed very heavily on those who had been taunting him. They fell silent for a while, and then tried to calm him down by speaking kind words to him.

The next day the same group of people assembled at the *Ka'bah* and began talking about the Prophet ﷺ. A few moments later the Prophet ﷺ appeared and they all rushed towards him in rabid anger. Pulling on his clothes, they asked, "Are you the one who orders us to stop worshipping the gods of our forefathers?"

The Prophet ﷺ was not intimidated. "Yes, I am."

The mob surrounded him on all sides, and some began pushing and shoving him from side to side while others shouted out insults. Uqba bin Abi Mu'ayt caught hold of a cloth hanging from around his neck and began choking the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Bakr ؓ heard the commotion and ran to defend him. He seized Uqba by his shoulders and pulled him off the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Bakr tore each man away from the Prophet, crying: "Woe to you! Would you kill a man simply because he says that Allâh is his Lord?"

Now the mob turned on Abu Bakr ؓ and let the Prophet ﷺ go. Abu Bakr paid a great price for rescuing the Prophet. The mob beat him violently, and his face was so battered that his nose was indistinguishable from his face. The people from Banu Taym wrapped him up and took him to his house. They were sure that he would not live to see the next day.

Abu Bakr ﵁, however, survived the assault. That evening he asked about the Prophet ﷺ. The people of Banu Taym rebuked him for his stubborn loyalty to the Prophet and went away. Unconcerned about his own health, Abu Bakr refused food and drink, insistent on seeing the Prophet to make sure he was alive and well. Finally, in the still darkness he was taken to the Prophet ﷺ in Dar Al-Arqam. There he saw the Prophet, and only then did he eat and drink.

Abu Bakr ﵁ suffered more and more at the hands of the Makkan pagans until he decided to migrate to Abyssinia. With this intention, he left Makkah and headed for what had become a place of refuge for Muslims. When he reached Bark Ghimad, he happened to meet Malik bin Dughunna, the leader of Qara[1] and Ahabish[2]. Malik asked him why he had left Makkah. When Abu Bakr told him he was migrating to Abyssinia, Malik voiced his disapproval:

> "A man like you cannot be expelled. You help the destitute, you keep good relations with your family, you bear the burden of the helpless, you are hospitable with guests, and you comfort those who suffer for the sake of truth. I pledge to protect you. Come along with me and pray to your Lord in your city."

Abu Bakr accepted Malik's pledge of protection, and both men journeyed together to Makkah. Malik bin Dughunna then announced that Abu Bakr was under his protection. The Quraysh accepted his pledge of safety for Abu Bakr on the condition that Abu Bakr would pray only inside his house so that no one would see him. The pagans feared that their women, children and more impressionable members would be influenced by such an open show of Islam.

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[1] The name of a well-known tribe

[2] A collection of a number of Arabian tribes who were bound by an agreement of mutual cooperation

Abu Bakr ﷺ abided by this stipulation for a while. He later made for himself a prayer area in his courtyard where he started praying and reciting the Qur'ân in the open. When Ibn Dughunna learned of this, he reminded him of the condition under which he had pledged his safety. Abu Bakr ﷺ then released him from his pledge saying, "I am agreeable to the protection and guarantee of my Lord."

Abu Bakr ﷺ was not only devout, but also tender-hearted. The Qur'ân, with its promise of reward and punishment, its descriptions of Allâh's creation, and its narratives about previous prophets moved him to tears. As he recited its verses, Abu Bakr would weep. Women and children would crowd around, watching in amazement at this show of emotion over the Qur'ân. The men of Quraysh were not about to tolerate this display for long and renewed their resolve to harass him.

Not all the Makkans, however, took such a harsh view of Islam. Even the pillars of pagan society found their stony hearts crumbling when in solitude they considered the Prophet's message. They were no less impressed by his courage in standing up to the Quraysh and his enduring patience.

Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet ﷺ, and Umar bin Khattab ﷺ were two such people, and their conversions marked a turning point in the short history of Islam.

Hamzah bin Abdul Mutallib embraces Islam

Once Abu Jahl happened to pass by the Prophet ﷺ near Mount Safa. He began insulting the Prophet ﷺ and, according to some sources, hit him on the head with a stone causing him to bleed. The Prophet ﷺ, ever patient, did not respond to Abu Jahl's harassment. A slave woman who belonged to Abdullah bin Jad'an witnessed the scene. Satisfied with himself, Abu Jahl went to the *Ka'bah* and sat with a group of men from the Quraysh.

Shortly afterwards Hamzah returned from hunting with his bow. When the slave woman told him what had happened to his

nephew, Hamzah turned on Abu Jahl, "You bag of wind, do you dare abuse my nephew when I follow his religion?" Hamzah struck Abu Jahl's head with his bow and made a gash. Men from Banu Makhzoom (Abu Jahl's tribesmen) and Banu Hashim (Hamzah's tribesmen) rose against each other until Abu Jahl ordered his relatives to stay put, saying, "Let Abu Ammara [Hamzah] go. I abused his nephew unjustly."

Hamzah's sudden conversion was obviously the result of a strong sense of family honor. The Prophet ﷺ had been trying for six lonely, difficult years to spread the message of Allâh, and Hamzah had not given it much thought until then. Soon, however, something began to grow in Hamzah's heart. He realized that faith was taking root, and he began to see that his love for Islam went beyond any kinship he had with Muhammad ﷺ. His faith in Allâh would become so powerful that he would later be called "*Asadullah*" (The Lion of Allâh).

Umar bin Al-Khattab accepts Islam

Only three days after Hamzah's conversion to Islam, Umar became a Muslim. Umar, a tall and powerful man, had been a staunch enemy of the Muslims. He was known for his fierce temper and his love of poetry and strong drink. The story of how Umar embraced Islam is one of the most interesting episodes in the history of Islam.

Umar had heard the Prophet ﷺ reciting verses of the Qur'ân at the *Ka'bah*, and some of the verses he overheard moved him. However, his heart remained firmly opposed to Islam and the Prophet ﷺ. His opposition grew to the point that one day he picked up his sword and decided to kill the Prophet ﷺ. Fortunately, Umar did not succeed in carrying out his intention.

With his sword gripped in his hand and his mind made up, Umar met Nu'aym bin Abdullah who asked him, "Where are you going?"

"I am going to slay Muhammad," he replied.

"How will you save yourself then from Banu Hashim and Banu

Zuhra?"

Angered at this question, which seemed like a challenge to him, Umar replied, "It seems as if you have forsaken our faith."

"Umar!" Nu'aym countered. "The amazing thing is that your sister and brother-in-law have also renounced your faith."

Umar was furious, and his attention was diverted from the Prophet ﷺ to his own family. In a rage, he headed straight for his sister's house. At that moment, Khabbab bin Aratt was at Umar's sister's house teaching her and her husband *Surah Ta Ha*. When they heard Umar outside the door, Khabbab hid himself, and Fatimah, Umar's sister, quickly hid the sheets of paper upon which the Qur'ânic verses were written.

"What was that babble I heard?"

They could see that Umar was enraged and armed with a sword.

"Nothing, we were just talking."

"Maybe, both of you have renounced your faith," Umar said.

Umar's brother-in-law said, "Well, tell me, Umar. What if the truth lies far from your religion?" Umar's response to this question was swift and violent. He pounced upon his brother-in-law and beat him mercilessly. When his sister tried to disengage the two in defense of her husband, Umar hit her hard on the face. Blood ran down her cheek, but at this point Fatimah was not to be deterred from speaking the truth. Echoing her husband's question, she challenged the wisdom of Umar's faith. "Umar! What if the truth lies far from your religion?"

Then in front of her brother, she declared her own faith, using the same words every Muslim utters as solemn testimony about the Oneness of Allâh and the Prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ. She said, "I bear witness that none is worthy of worship other than Allâh, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allâh."

When Umar heard his sister's proud affirmation of her faith, he

was overwhelmed with shame. "Show me what you were reading from," he said.

His sister retorted, "You are unclean, and only the pure and clean can touch it. Go wash yourself."

A chastened Umar bathed and then took the pages of *Surah Ta Ha* in his hand and recited *Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Raheem* (In the name of Allâh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful).

"These are pure names," Umar said. He continued reading:

﴿ إِنَّنِىٓ أَنَا ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعْبُدْنِى وَأَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ لِذِكْرِىٓ ﴾ [طه: ١٤]

> "Verily, I am Allâh—there is no god but I, so worship Me and offer prayers in remembrance of Me." (20:14)

Umar exclaimed in awe at the sublimity of the verses. "Where can I find Muhammad?" he asked.

When Khabbab رضي الله عنه heard this, he came out of hiding and said, "O Umar! Rejoice. I prayed that Allâh would bless you. Thursday night I heard the Prophet ﷺ praying to Allâh, saying: O Allâh, strengthen Islam by Umar bin Khattab or Abu Jahl bin Hisham!"

When Umar heard that the Prophet ﷺ was at Dar Al-Arqam, he rushed there hoping to find him. He knocked on the door, and one of the Prophet's Companions peeped through a chink to see Umar, sword in hand, looking very agitated. The Companion rushed into the back of the house with the alarming news.

"What's the matter?" Hamzah رضي الله عنه asked.

"Umar is at the door," the Companion reported.

"Is that all?" exclaimed Hamzah. "If he comes in peace, fine. If not, we simply kill him with his own sword."

Muhammad ﷺ, meanwhile, was in the midst of receiving a revelation from Allâh, and upon completion of the revelation he came into the sitting room. There sat Umar. The Prophet ﷺ caught him by his clothes and sword belt and said to him

urgently, "Umar! Will you not turn back from your path unless Allâh Almighty sends down on you such chastisement as He did on Waleed bin Mugheera? O Allâh! This is Umar bin Khattab. O Allâh! Bestow power and glory on Islam through this Umar bin Khattab."

After the Prophet ﷺ ended his supplication, Umar said, "I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship other than Allâh, and that you are the Prophet of Allâh."

Those present in the house cried, "*Allâhu Akbar*!" (God is the Greatest!) so loudly that their cry resonated around the *Ka'bah*.

The polytheists react to Umar's conversion

Umar ﷺ was reputed among his tribesmen for his size and temperament. Now that he was Muslim, he was determined to announce his faith to the Prophet's foes. Who but Abu Jahl, the Prophet's fiercest enemy, deserved to hear the news first?

Umar knocked on Abu Jahl's door. Abu Jahl came out and greeted him, "Welcome! What brings you here?"

"I have come to tell you that I have embraced the religion of Allâh and His Messenger, Muhammad," Umar calmly stated.

Abu Jahl heard this thunderclap and said, "May God ruin you and what you have brought!"

Umar afterwards went to Asi bin Hashim, who hurried back into his house once he heard the news. Umar's next stop was at the house of Jameel bin Mu'ammar Jami, who was noted for spreading sensational news. When Umar told him that he had embraced Islam, Jameel screamed," The son of Khattab has turned faithless!"

"You lie," said Umar indignantly. "I have become Muslim."

The people heard Jameel's cries, and they came running. They turned on Umar ﷺ and began beating him, but he fought them

off and returned home. The pagans, however, were not prepared to let Umar get away easily. They gathered and decided to put him to death. A huge crowd of people moved toward his house to carry out the verdict, but were met by Aas bin Wa'il Sahmi. He belonged to the Banu Sahm, a clan that had close relations with Umar's clan, Banu Adiy.

Umar told Aas, "Your people wish to kill me."

"Impossible," said Aas. Just then he saw the crowd milling outside and approached them.

"Where are you going?" Aas asked the people.

"The son of Khattab has turned faithless," they explained.

"None of these paths leads to Umar's house," he replied.

The mob looked at Aas, who stood before them, an imposing figure in his striped Yemeni robe with lace trim. They understood his veiled threat and thought it prudent to leave Umar alone and return home.

Umar's conversion strengthens Islam

So far the Muslims had always prayed in secret. To pray in the open was to risk being abused and beaten by the Makkans. Umar ﷺ, however, felt that the time had come for Muslims to practise their faith in full view of their enemies. "O Prophet!" Umar said one day. "Don't we have truth on our side whether we are alive or dead? Why should we hide our faith? I swear by Allâh who has sent you to us with the Truth that we will no longer hide!"

Umar's words rang true, so it was decided that from then on there was no need to pray in secrecy. The Muslims formed two rows behind the Prophet ﷺ and walked to the *Ka'bah*, one row headed by Hamzah, the other by Umar. The Makkans could only watch as the Muslims began to pray behind the Prophet ﷺ. From that day onward Umar was known as "*Farooq*," one who distinguishes truth from falsehood.

Ibn Mas'ud ﷺ, one of the Prophet's Companions, said, "The day Umar accepted Islam, we gained both strength and prestige." He also said, "We could not perform our prayers at the *Ka'bah* until Umar embraced Islam."

Suhayb ﷺ, another Companion of the Prophet, said, "Islam came to light when Umar accepted light. We preached openly and congregated at the *Ka'bah*, and we also took revenge on everyone who had persecuted us."

An offer no ordinary man could refuse

Once again the Makkan pagans decided it was time to hold talks on the growing strength of Islam. The conversions of Hamzah and Umar رضي الله عنهما had changed things considerably, and the Makkans realized their power base was fast collapsing.

Utbah bin Rabi'a, a member of Banu Abd Shams, was a chieftain of his people and well-respected throughout Makkah. He addressed the other notables of Makkah who had gathered to discuss the problem of Muhammad ﷺ and his followers: "O people of Quraysh, shall I not talk to Muhammad and bargain with him? Perhaps he will accept my offer, in which case we will be rid of him."

The council approved, and Utbah was charged with approaching the Prophet ﷺ with an offer no ordinary man could refuse.

Utbah found Muhammad ﷺ sitting alone at the *Ka'bah*. He said:

> "O my nephew! You know you enjoy a high position in this city. You are the best among us in respect to lineage. Now you have brought something very serious, and you have created a rift among your people by ridiculing them, insulting their gods as well as their religion, declaring their forefathers to be heathens, and rejecting their customs. Now, listen to me. I will make a few suggestions, and you may find one agreeable."

"O Abul Waleed," replied the Prophet ﷺ, "go on. I am listening."

Utbah continued:

> "My nephew, if it is wealth you hope to obtain by your preaching, we will collect enough for you so that you will be the richest among us. If it is honor you desire, we will make you our chief and leave every decision to you. If you wish to be king, we will recognize you as our monarch. If you desire beautiful women, choose any woman from the Quraysh—we will give you ten such women in marriage. And if you are possessed by a demon, we will find a skilled physician for you and spend all that it takes to restore your health."

"Is that all you have to say?" the Prophet ﷺ asked.

"Yes," replied Utbah.

"Now listen to me," said the Prophet ﷺ.

"I am listening," he said.

The Prophet ﷺ then recited the opening verses of the *Surah Fussilat:*

﴿ حمٓ ○ تَنزِيلٌ مِّنَ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ○ كِتَٰبٌ فُصِّلَتۡ ءَايَٰتُهُۥ قُرۡءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوۡمٖ يَعۡلَمُونَ
○ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا فَأَعۡرَضَ أَكۡثَرُهُمۡ فَهُمۡ لَا يَسۡمَعُونَ ○ وَقَالُواْ قُلُوبُنَا فِيٓ أَكِنَّةٖ مِّمَّا
تَدۡعُونَآ إِلَيۡهِ وَفِيٓ ءَاذَانِنَا وَقۡرٞ وَمِنۢ بَيۡنِنَا وَبَيۡنِكَ حِجَابٞ فَٱعۡمَلۡ إِنَّنَا عَٰمِلُونَ ﴾

[فصلت: ١-٥]

> "*Haa-Meem.* A revelation from Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. A book with verses that are explained in detail. A Qur'ân in Arabic for people who understand. Giving glad tidings and admonition, yet most of them turn away, and so do not hear. They say: Our hearts are veiled from that which you invite us to accept, our ears are deaf, and between you and us is a screen. So do your work, and we will do ours." (41:1-5)

The Prophet ﷺ continued to recite, and Utbah listened carefully.

Then the Prophet ﷺ came to the following verse:

﴿ فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنذَرْتُكُمْ صَـٰعِقَةً مِّثْلَ صَـٰعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ ﴾ [فصلت: ١٣]

> "And if they turn away, then say: I have warned you of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt that struck Aad and Thamood." (41:13)

Utbah put his hand on Muhammad's mouth and pleaded with him not to bring about such a terrible punishment.

The Prophet ﷺ came to a verse that required him to prostrate, and he did so. Having finished his recitation, he asked Utbah, "O Abul Waleed, have you heard?"

"Yes," he replied. "I have heard."

"Then it is time for you to decide," Muhammad ﷺ said.

Utbah then left and went directly to his comrades. As he approached them, they noticed a strange expression on his face. They asked him what had happened, and he related what had passed between him and Muhammad ﷺ:

> "I have heard a discourse the like of which I have never heard. I swear to God, O Quraysh, that it is not poetry, nor is it the result of spells or witchcraft. Take my advice and leave this man alone. By God, something more astonishing is bound to happen than what I have heard. Now, if the Arabs kill this man, your task will be accomplished by others, and if this man brings the Arabs under his control, his kingdom will be your kingdom, his honor will be your honor, and he will prove fortunate for you."

Utbah's audience grew suspicious. "You have been bewitched by his tongue," they said.

"This is my opinion," replied Utbah. "Now you may do whatever you think fit."

Bargaining and Renunciation

If Muhammad could not be tempted to renounce his religion, the Makkans thought, perhaps he would compromise.

They sent a group of men to Muhammad ﷺ with a suggestion as to how each side in the dispute could be made happy. "We wish to place before you something which will set the matter right for you," they proudly announced to the Prophet ﷺ.

"What's that?" The Prophet ﷺ asked.

"You worship our gods for one year," they explained, "and we worship your God for one year. That way, if our religion is true, you will have a share of the reward, and if your religion is true, we will have a share."

In reply to this suggestion from the Quraysh, *Surah Al-Kafiroon* (The Unbelievers) was revealed:

﴿ قُلْ يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْكَـٰفِرُونَ ○ لَآ أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ○ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عَـٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ
○ وَلَآ أَنَا۠ عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدتُّمْ ○ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ عَـٰبِدُونَ مَآ أَعْبُدُ ○ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِىَ دِينِ ﴾

[الكافرون: ١-٦]

> "Say: O you who reject faith. I do not worship that which you worship. And you do not worship that which I worship. And I will never worship that which you worship. Nor will you ever worship that which I worship. To you be your religion, and to me mine." (109:1-6)

Allâh also revealed two additional verses stressing the monotheistic purity of Islam:

﴿ قُلْ أَفَغَيْرَ ٱللَّهِ تَأْمُرُوٓنِّىٓ أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا ٱلْجَـٰهِلُونَ ﴾ [الزمر: ٦٤]

> "Say: Is it someone other than Allâh that you order me to worship, O ignorant ones?" (39:64)

The next verse was also revealed in connection with the Quraysh's suggestion, and it further drives home the point:

﴿قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ﴾ [الأنعام: ٥٦]

"Say: I have been forbidden to worship those whom you pray to." (6:56)

The Makkans, however, still believed that they could bargain with the Prophet ﷺ. "Bring another Qur'ân in place of this one," they haggled. "Or make some changes in the present one ﷺ."

In response to this request, Allâh told the Prophet:

﴿وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتُنَا بَيِّنَٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا ائْتِ بِقُرْءَانٍ غَيْرِ هَٰذَا أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِن تِلْقَاءِ نَفْسِي إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾ [يونس: ١٥]

"And when My clear verses are recited to them, those who do not look forward to meeting Me say, 'Bring another Qur'ân or change this one.' Say to them: It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow what is revealed to me. And I fear that if I disobey my Lord, I will meet with a terrible punishment on the Day of Judgment." (10:15)

Other verses were also revealed which made it clear that the Prophet's role was not to bargain with the pagans, but to convey the message just as it was revealed to him:

﴿وَإِن كَادُوا لَيَفْتِنُونَكَ عَنِ الَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهُ وَإِذًا لَّاتَّخَذُوكَ خَلِيلًا ۝ وَلَوْلَا أَن ثَبَّتْنَاكَ لَقَدْ كِدتَّ تَرْكَنُ إِلَيْهِمْ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا ۝ إِذًا لَّأَذَقْنَاكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيَاةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيرًا﴾ [الإسراء: ٧٣-٧٥]

"They were about to tempt you away from that which I revealed to you, hoping to fabricate something in My name. They would certainly have made you their friend. And if I had not strengthened you, you would have inclined to them a little. And if you had done so, I would have made you taste a double portion of punishment in this life and a double portion after death, and you would not have found anyone to help you against Me." (17:73-75)

Once the Makkans understood that the Prophet ﷺ was sincere in his beliefs and was not prepared to compromise, they were determined to find out whether he was an actual prophet or just imagined himself to be one.

In order to find out how to test Muhammad ﷺ, the Makkans sought guidance from some Jewish rabbis. These learned men told the Makkans to ask Muhammad ﷺ three questions, and if he answered them correctly, then he was indeed a prophet. If, however, he could not answer them, then he was certainly an impostor.

First, the rabbis told the Makkans to ask Muhammad the incredible story in their scriptures about some youths. The second question concerned a person who had traveled throughout both the East and the West. Thirdly, they instructed the Makkans to ask Muhammad ﷺ about the soul.

The chieftains of the Quraysh put these questions to the Prophet ﷺ, and *Surah Al-Kahf* (The Cave) was revealed in response.

The *Surah* tells the story of a few young boys who, upon being persecuted by polytheists, sought refuge in a cave. Allâh caused them to go into a deep sleep for hundreds of years, and then raised them up again as a sign of the coming day of resurrection.

The chapter also tells the story of Dhul Qarnain, the man who roamed throughout the world. Finally, the last question was answered in *Surah Al-Israa*:

﴿وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلرُّوحِ قُلِ ٱلرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّى وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

[الإسراء: ٨٥]

> "They ask you about the spirit. Say: The spirit is My Lord's affair, and man has been given but little knowledge." (17:85)

Muhammad ﷺ had correctly answered all three questions put to him by the rabbis through the Quraysh. Now that the Quraysh

had evidence that Muhammad ﷺ was a true prophet, they were faced with a difficult decision. They were still not prepared to embrace Islam without reservations as Muhammad's followers had. The solution, they believed, was to ask the Prophet ﷺ to let them enter Islam not as typical Muslims, but as Muslims with special status. The majority of the Prophet's followers being from the lower strata of Makkan society, the elite of the Quraysh could not consider interacting with their inferiors on equal terms.

They met with the Prophet to discuss this idea. The Prophet ﷺ was so eager to have the Makkan nobility embrace Islam that he may have been on the verge of accepting their proposal. But Allâh ordered him to resist the temptation in the following verse:

﴿ وَلَا تَطْرُدِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلْغَدَوٰةِ وَٱلْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُۥ ۖ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِم مِّن شَىْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِم مِّن شَىْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلظَّـٰلِمِينَ ﴾

[الأنعام: ٥٢]

"Send not away those who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face. You are not accountable for them, nor they for you. If you turn them away, you will be among those who are unjust." (6:52)

The Prophet ﷺ was thus forbidden to give the nobility among the Quraysh any special consideration within the fold of Islam, thus effectively ensuring the complete absence of a class system. This meant that no Muslim could be superior to his brother in Islam except through faith and good deeds.

Hastening on the punishment

The Prophet ﷺ was also sent to his people to warn them that if they continued rejecting the call to faith, Allâh might at any time punish them severely. He cautioned them but they waited and watched. Nothing happened, so their inherent arrogance grew, and they challenged the Prophet ﷺ to hasten Allâh's punishment. Allâh replied to their request in the following three verses:

﴿ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِٱلْعَذَابِ وَلَن يُخْلِفَ ٱللَّهُ وَعْدَهُۥ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِندَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴾ [الحج: ٤٧]

"Yet, they ask you to hasten on the punishment! But Allâh will not fail in His Promise. Verily, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning." (22:47)

﴿ يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِٱلْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌۢ بِٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴾ [العنكبوت: ٥٤]

"They ask you to hasten on the punishment. Indeed, Hell will encircle the unbelievers." (29:54)

﴿ أَفَأَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ مَكَرُوا۟ ٱلسَّيِّـَٔاتِ أَن يَخْسِفَ ٱللَّهُ بِهِمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ○ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ فِى تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَمَا هُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ أَوْ يَأْخُذَهُمْ عَلَىٰ تَخَوُّفٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾ [النحل: ٤٥-٤٧]

"Are the plotters of wickedness not afraid that Allâh will cause the earth to swallow them up? Or that Allâh's punishment will seize them unexpectedly, or that He may call them to account in the midst of their daily affairs when they have no chance to escape? Or that He may cause them to waste away gradually? Truly, your Lord is kind and merciful." (16:45-47)

Again, the Makkans found a way to evade the truth. They remained stubborn in their opposition, and made further demands of the Prophet ﷺ, asking him to enact miracles even as they hoped he would be unable to perform them. Thus, they wavered, sometimes approaching the Prophet ﷺ with compromises, and at other times challenging him to do the impossible. Many of the Makkans felt that the only solution was the sword, while others feared the consequences of killing their adversary.

The Makkans had already asked Abu Talib to hand over Muhammad ﷺ so that they could kill him, a demand he had refused. Despite his seeming unconcern at their threats, he was secretly afraid, and with good reason, that the Quraysh were

plotting to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Talib acted fast and called on the members of Banu Hashim and Banu Al-Muttalib to meet at the *Ka'bah.* He convinced them to pledge that they would protect their clansman, Muhammad, but Abu Lahab, another of the Prophet's uncles and self-proclaimed sworn enemy, refused to take the pledge. He declared he was on the side of the Quraysh.

Total boycott

The polytheists would not be outsmarted. They held a meeting at Haneef Banu Kinana to decide how best to counter Abu Talib's successful maneuver. Eventually they came up with the idea of a total social boycott. Thenceforth the members of Banu Hashim and Banu Al-Muttalib were to be treated as outcasts. The other clans from the Quraysh would not marry their daughters, transact business with them, keep company with them, nor would they accept any peace overtures from these two clans until they handed over the Prophet ﷺ.

Once all the people present had agreed with the points mentioned above, Baghid bin Amir bin Hashim put this pact in writing and the parchment was hung in the *Ka'bah.* When the deed was done, Baghid's hand, or at least some of his fingers, were paralyzed.

The boycott proved devastating. The Muslims as well as all the members of Banu Hashim and Banu Al-Muttalib (Muslims as well as non-Muslims), with the exception of Abu Lahab, were forced to withdraw from Makkah and live in She'eb Abi Talib. Unable to buy food from the Makkans, they found themselves reduced to eating leaves and roots. The situation became so horrific that the cries of starving women and children echoed over the valley. Few sympathizers dared smuggle them any food for fear of punishment. Hakim bin Hazam, however, managed now and then to send some flour to his aunt, Khadeejah.

Many caravans carrying food and other goods passed by the mountain pass where the Muslims and the exiled clans lived. The

refugees, however, could only come out to meet the caravans to buy food during the forbidden months, those months when fighting was prohibited. The Makkans, however, used to offer much higher prices to the caravan merchants for their goods so that the refugees could not compete with them.

Despite such grim circumstances, the Prophet ﷺ never ceased inviting non-Muslims to Islam. He was particularly active during the time of *Hajj*. It was at this time that he would speak to tribes that had traveled to Makkah from all over the Arab world.

Boycott ends

Three years of near starvation and hardship took Banu Hashim and Banu Al-Muttalib to the edge of despair. Meanwhile, Allâh was softening the hearts of the Quraysh, through the five "*Ashraaf*" (nobles) who were the only people to give a thought to the refugees' plight. The first of these five was Hisham bin Amr bin Harith, a highly respected nobleman of the Quraysh. When he reflected on the suffering of the exiles, he was deeply saddened. They were kinsmen, and the Quraysh had done the unthinkable by breaking off all ties with them. While the families in Makkah thrived, the refugees were dying of starvation one by one. In the three years since the enforcement of the boycott, no one seemed interested in its withdrawal. Finally, Hisham decided to talk to four other high-ranking members of the Quraysh and convince them to end this injustice.

Hisham first spoke with Zuhayr bin Abd Abi Umayya Makhzoomi (the Prophet's cousin), Mut'im bin Adiy, Abul Bukhtari bin Hisham, and finally to Zam'a bin Aswad. He appealed to their sense of kinship and reproached them for allowing the tyranny to continue. When they heard his plea, they all agreed with him that the parchment hanging in the *Ka'bah* should be torn to pieces.

The next morning the four men waited for other members of the Quraysh to assemble around the *Ka'bah*. Zuhayr finished

circumambulating the *Ka'bah* and then stood before the people. "O people of Makkah," he began. "Shall we eat and drink while Banu Hashim die of hunger, unable even to buy or sell? By God I will not rest until this cruel and unjust decree is torn to pieces."

Abu Jahl was furious: "You are wrong! By God, it will not be torn."

Zam'a countered, "By God, it is you who are wrong. When it was written we were not in agreement."

"Zam'a is right," Abul Bukhtari said. "We do not agree to what is written in that decree, nor do we lend our support to it."

Now it was Mut'im bin Adiy's turn. "Both of you are right. There is no sin in opposing the decree. We seek our acquittal from God regarding the document and whatever it contains." Hisham bin Amr expressed his agreement with Mut'im.

The sudden rebellion made Abu Jahl suspicious. "This looks prearranged. Your sudden concern has its seeds somewhere else," he protested.

At this point, Abu Talib saw his opportunity to step in. He had come into the precincts of the *Ka'bah* to tell the Quraysh that the Prophet ﷺ had received a revelation about the fate of the iniquitous parchment. He stood up, and facing the Quraysh, he told them that Allâh had revealed to the Prophet ﷺ that termites had eaten the parchment inside the *Ka'bah*. The only thing that remained of the document, Abu Talib said, were the words "In Your Name, O Allâh." Abu Talib then challenged the Quraysh, saying that if the Prophet's claim turned out to be false, he would no longer stand between them and the Prophet ﷺ. However, if the Prophet had spoken the truth, the Quraysh should end the boycott. The Quraysh accepted Abu Talib's challenge.

When Mut'im bin Adiy rose to retrieve the parchment, the assembly saw that it had been destroyed. Its only remaining words were *"Bismika Allâhumma"* (In Your Name, O Allâh) and Allâh's name.

Allâh had given the Quraysh yet another sign, but once again

they refused to admit their error and accept Islam. Their only concession was to end the boycott. The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions came out of the mountain pass and were allowed to live in Makkah once again.

The Quraysh petition Abu Talib

A few months after the boycott ended, Abu Talib fell ill. He was over eighty years old, and the Quraysh did not expect him to recover. While this appeared to be good news for the Makkan pagans, the Quraysh felt that it made the situation even more complicated. How would it look to the other tribes in the peninsula, they asked themselves, if we punished Muhammad after his uncle died? It would be more prudent, they decided, if they approached Abu Talib with a proposal: ask your nephew to keep silent about our gods, and we'll hold our peace about his religion.

Abu Talib, knowing that he would not live much longer, was certainly interested in finding some way to ensure his nephew's safety after his death. He heard the proposal from the Quraysh and called his beloved nephew to his bedside. The Prophet ﷺ listened and then turned to Abu Talib. "Uncle!" He said. "I ask them only one thing. And if they accept this thing, the whole of Arabia will be under their control, and the non-Arabs will pay them tribute."

"Only one thing?" the Quraysh asked. "We are prepared to accept ten such things. What is it?"

"*La ilaaha illallâh*," said the Prophet ﷺ: "There is no deity except the One God, Allâh."

"What!" The Quraysh exclaimed, marveling at this statement. "He has fashioned only one god out of all of them. This is very strange."

The year of sorrow

Abu Talib's illness worsened, and as the hour of his death drew near, the Prophet ﷺ went to his side. He found Abu Jahl and

Abdullah bin Abi Umayya sitting beside his dying uncle. Undeterred by their presence, the Prophet ﷺ urged Abu Talib to make the declaration of faith, *"La ilaaha illallâh."*

"My uncle, say *La ilaaha illallâh.* This is a simple phrase, and if you say it, I'll plead with Allâh for your salvation."

The two pagans, however, refused to sit in silence. "Abu Talib," they cried. "Will you shun the religion of Abdul Muttalib?"

They continued talking to the dying man until the last words that were heard from Abu Talib were: "...on the religion of Abdul Muttalib."

Still, the Prophet ﷺ refused to give up on his uncle. "I will ask Allâh to forgive you until I am forbidden to do so." Soon after that, however, the following verse was revealed:

﴿ مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَن يَسْتَغْفِرُوا۟ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوٓا۟ أُو۟لِى قُرْبَىٰ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْجَحِيمِ ﴾ [التوبة: ١١٣]

> "It is not fitting for the Prophet and the believers that they should pray for forgiveness for pagans, even if they are kin, after it is clear to them that they are companions of the Fire." (9:113)

Another verse was also revealed:

﴿ إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِى مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِٱلْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴾ [القصص: ٢٨]

> "It is not for you to guide whomever you like, but it is Allâh who guides whom He wishes, and Allâh knows those who are guided." (28:56)

Abu Talib died in the month of either Rajab or Ramadan, ten years after the Prophet began his mission. Although he had supported the Prophet ﷺ and protected him from his enemies, he died clinging to the faith of his forefathers.

Abbas ؓ, one of the Prophet's uncles, once asked the Prophet ﷺ,

"How could you be of any service to Abu Talib, the one who supported you and rebuked others for your sake?"

The Prophet ﷺ said, "He is lying in a shallow part of Hell. Had I not been there, he would have been sent to a deep ditch in Hell."

Khadeejah رضي الله عنها dies

Two months and three days after the death of Abu Talib, the Prophet's wife, Khadeejah, passed away. She was the Prophet's trusted advisor and loyal companion, and was known by the title "Mother of the believers."

The Prophet ﷺ once said of Khadeejah:

> "When no one believed me, she believed in me, when people accused me of lying, she affirmed my truthfulness, and when people tried to impoverish me, she made me a partner in her wealth. Allâh gave me children through her, and none through my other wives."

Once Khadeejah came bearing food for the Prophet ﷺ, who was in the midst of receiving a revelation from Jibreel عليه السلام. The angel said: "O Prophet! Here is Khadeejah coming to you with a vessel. Give her greetings from your Lord, and give her glad tidings of a palace of pearls in Paradise in which there are only peace and repose."

Long after her death, and despite his subsequent remarriages, the Prophet ﷺ would often mention Khadeejah and pray for Allâh's mercy on her soul. Thinking of her, he would begin to weep. Whenever he slaughtered a lamb, he would send her friends a portion of the meat.

Sorrow after sorrow

After the deaths of Abu Talib and Khadeejah, the Makkan pagans became bold and would often insult and ridicule the Prophet ﷺ in public. Now that the Prophet ﷺ had lost his two greatest supporters, small acts of unkindness stung him more

than ever as he grieved over his bereavement.

Once a man from the Quraysh threw dust on the Prophet's head. One of the Prophet's daughters washed away the dirt, weeping bitterly at her father's suffering. Trying to console her, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Dear daughter! Do not cry, for Allâh will protect your father." Later he admitted that it was only after Abu Talib's death that the insults of the Quraysh began to prick him.

The Prophet ﷺ marries Saudah and then Aishah رضي الله عنهما

About one month after the death of Khadeejah رضى الله عنها, the Prophet ﷺ married Saudah bint Zam'a in the month of Shawwal. Saudah had previously been married to her cousin, Sakran bin Amr ﷺ. The couple had been among the early Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia. After returning to Makkah, Sauda's husband died. At the end of her period of mourning, the Prophet ﷺ married her.

A year later the Prophet ﷺ married Aishah رضى الله عنها in the month of Shawwal. This marriage was also solemnized in Makkah. At the time, Aishah رضى الله عنها was only six years old; however, she was sent as a bride to the Prophet ﷺ when she was nine. She was the most beloved wife of the Prophet and the greatest female scholar of Islam. The relationship between the Prophet ﷺ and her has given Muslims an insight into the Prophet's role as a husband and the deep love he inspired in her. The camaraderie between them, the painful episode of the slander against Aishah رضى الله عنها, and the confidences he divulged to her all give us insights into their rich, complex and profound relationship.

The Prophet ﷺ journeys to Tâ'if

Soon the Prophet ﷺ felt that it was time to take the message of Islam to neighboring tribes. He made his way on foot to Tâ'if, about thirty miles east of Makkah, traveling with his former slave, Zayd bin Haritha رضي الله عنها .

Along the way to Tâ'if, the Prophet ﷺ invited each tribe he

encountered to embrace Islam. Finally, he reached Taif and met three brothers, all chieftains of the Thaqif tribe. He invited them to Islam and asked them to help him spread his message, but they responded with hostility.

The Prophet ﷺ left the chieftains and looked for others to talk with about Islam. For the next few days he continued his search to find anyone who would open his heart to Allâh's word, but no one was interested. Each chieftain he met proved arrogant and unfriendly when he explained his mission and requested help. Instead of accepting his call to Islam, they asked him to leave Tâ'if and return from whence he came. They even stirred up children, slaves and the rabble against him. As the Prophet ﷺ made his way out of the township, a rag tag band ran after him, abusing him and throwing stones at him until even his feet dripped blood.

Zayd tried to protect the Prophet ﷺ from their blows, and in doing so suffered several cuts on his head. The Prophet and Zayd escaped and sought refuge three miles away in an orchard belonging to Utbah and Sheba, the sons of Rabi'a.

There the Prophet ﷺ sat down in the shade of a wall covered with grapevines and prayed aloud to Allâh in a supplication known as *Du'aa Al-Mustad'afeen* (the Prayer of the Oppressed):

«اللَّهُمَّ إِلَيْكَ أَشْكُو ضَعْفَ قُوَّتِي، وَقِلَّةَ حِيْلَتِي، وَهَوَانِي عَلَى النَّاسِ.
يَاأَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ، أَنْتَ رَبُّ المُسْتَضْعَفِينَ، وَأَنْتَ رَبِّي، إِلَى مَنْ
تَكِلُنِي ؟ إِلَى بَعِيدٍ يَتَجَهَّمُنِي. أَمْ إِلَى عَدُو مَلَّكْتَهُ أَمْرِي. إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ بِكَ
عَلَيَّ غَضَبٌ فَلَا أُبَالِي، وَلَكِنَّ عَافِيَتَكَ هِيَ أَوْسَعُ لِي. أَعُوذُ بِنُورِ
وَجْهِكَ الَّذِي أَشْرَقَتْ لَهُ الظُّلُمَاتُ، وَصَلَحَ عَلَيهِ أَمْرُ الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ مِنْ
أَنْ تَنْزِلَ بِي غَضَبُكَ. أَوْ يَحِلَّ عَلَيَّ سَخَطُكَ، لَكَ العُتْبَى حَتَّى تَرْضَى،
وَلاَ حَولَ وَلاَ قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِكَ»

"O Allâh! I complain to You of my weakness and

humiliation before the people. You are the Most Merciful, the Lord of the weak and my Lord too. To whom have you entrusted me? To one who does not care for me? Or have you appointed my enemy as master of my affairs? So long as You are not angry with me, I care not. Your favor is abundant for me. I seek refuge in the light of Your Face, by which all darkness is dispelled and every affair of this world and the next is set right, lest Your anger or Your displeasure descend upon me. I desire Your pleasure and satisfaction. There is no power and no might except in You."

The sons of Rabi'a, who saw the Prophet ﷺ taking refuge in their orchard, were moved by the sight of a weary traveler with a long road ahead of him, and sent their slave Addas to him with a bunch of grapes. The Prophet ﷺ took the grapes, and only after saying *Bismillah* (in the name of Allâh) did he begin to eat. Addas was surprised to hear the Prophet ﷺ invoke Allâh's name before eating.

"The people around this area never utter such phrases," he told the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ asked Addas, "Where are you from, and what is your religion?"

"I am a Christian and belong to Ninevah," replied Addas.

"Are you from the village of the pious man, Yunus bin Mati?" the Prophet ﷺ asked.

"How do you know of him?" Addas asked.

"He is my brother," the Prophet ﷺ responded. "He was a prophet and so am I."

The Prophet ﷺ then recited some verses from the Qur'ân referring to the Prophet Yunus (Jonah). Addas was so impressed that he accepted the Prophet's call to Islam.

The Prophet ﷺ resumed his journey back to Makkah, and dejection

set in. At Qarn Al-Manazil, a cloud bearing the angel Jibreel عليه السلام appeared before the Prophet ﷺ. With him was another angel.

"Allâh has sent to you the angel of the mountains," Jibreel said. "He is at your command."

The angel of the mountains said, "O Muhammad, I am here to do as you say. The choice is yours: I can crush the people of Tâ'if between two hills, if that is your wish."

The Prophet ﷺ, however, was not looking for revenge. "No. I hope Allâh will bring forth from their loins people who will worship Allâh alone without associating any partners with Him."

Jibreel's visit lifted the Prophet's spirits. He no longer felt forsaken, and a heavy weight was removed from his heart. He continued his journey, and after some time, he halted at Nakhlah, where he stayed a couple of days. It was at Nakhlah that a strange event occurred. Even the Prophet ﷺ did not know of it until it was revealed in the Qur'ân.

The Prophet ﷺ was praying the *Fajr* prayer when a band of jinn (spirits, from which the English word "genie" is derived) heard him reciting the Qur'ân. They listened with great interest, and when the Prophet ﷺ finished, they returned to their companions and warned them of a great chastisement for those who disbelieved in the Prophet's message. Although they did not come in contact with the Prophet ﷺ directly, the jinn who had listened to the Prophet ﷺ that morning embraced Islam. The Prophet only became aware of what had happened when Allâh revealed the story in the Qur'ân in two different chapters, *Surah Al-Ahqaf* and *Surah Al-Jinn.*

A few days later, the Prophet ﷺ left Nakhlah and headed toward Makkah. As he drew near Makkah, he began to make preparations, for he did not want to enter Makkah defenseless as he had done in Tâ'if. He paused at Hira and sent a man to Akhtas bin Shariq to ask for protection. Akhtas, however, apologized

and pointed out that since he was an ally of the Quraysh, he could not protect the Prophet. The Prophet ﷺ then sent the same message to Suhayl bin Amr.

Even Suhayl refused to extend protection to the Prophet ﷺ because he belonged to Banu Amir bin Luayy, which had also declared the Prophet an enemy. The Prophet ﷺ then sent his message to Mut'im bin Adiy. Mut'im's grandfather, Naufal, was the brother of Hashim bin Abdu Munaf, one of the Prophet's ancestors, and the clan of Abdu Manaf was one of the most revered branches of the Quraysh.

Mut'im, respecting the ties that bound him to the Prophet ﷺ, agreed to protect his kinsman. He and his sons armed themselves and then sent for the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ went directly to the *Ka'bah* and circumambulated it, performed a short prayer, and then went home. During the entire time Mut'im bin Adiy and his sons kept watch. Mut'im then announced that he had extended protection to Muhammad ﷺ.

The polytheists demand a sign

The Makkan pagans had been shown many signs that confirmed the truthfulness of Muhammad's claim to be a prophet, but they ignored them all. Although they were not prepared to accept any further signs, they demanded that Muhammad ﷺ show them clear proof from Allâh that he was indeed a messenger. Their intention of course was simply to humiliate him before the people.

One day the pagans were assembled at the *Ka'bah* and sent for the Prophet. The Prophet ﷺ hurried to meet them, thinking that they wished to discuss the possibility of entering Islam. He sat down with them to hear the same demands they had made before: "Muhammad, you tell us that the prophets had signs: Musa [Moses] had a miraculous staff, Saleh had a camel, and Isa [Jesus] resurrected the dead. The prophets of yore came with clear signs. We want you to also show us something to confirm that you are like them."

Prophets, the Quraysh thought, should have the power to perform miracles at will. They did not understand that Allâh performed these miracles through His prophets.

Deaf, dumb, and blind, as Allâh characterizes them in the Qur'ân, the disbelievers refused to see the numerous signs of Allâh manifest in His creation and in the Qur'ân. Instead, they wanted to see flamboyant acts of sorcery. Accordingly, they asked the Prophet ﷺ to do any of the following: turn Mount Safa into a mountain of gold, carry the mountains somewhere else and change the surrounding area into a wide valley, cause a spring to gush forth, or bring back to life their ancestors so that they could testify that Muhammad ﷺ was truly a prophet.

Allâh mentions their demands for signs in the Qur'ân:

﴿ وَقَالُوا لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنبُوعًا ○ أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ
وَعِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا ○ أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا
أَوْ تَأْتِيَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا ○ أَوْ يَكُونَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّن زُخْرُفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَن
نُّؤْمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ حَتَّىٰ تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَّقْرَؤُهُ ﴾ [الإسراء: ٩٠-٩٣]

> "We shall not believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth; or you have a garden of date trees and grapevines, and you cause rivers to gush forth in their midst; or you cause the sky to fall in pieces as you have claimed will happen; or you bring Allâh and the angels before us face to face; or you have a house decorated lavishly; or you ascend into the heavens. No, we shall not even believe in your ascension until you bring us a book that we can read!" (17:90-93)

The pagans claimed that if the Prophet ﷺ performed any of these miracles, they would embrace Islam. This promise is also mentioned in the Qur'ân:

﴿ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَّيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا ﴾ [الأنعام: ١٠٩]

"They swear their strongest oaths by Allâh that if they were given a sign, they would believe." (6:109)

The Prophet ﷺ prayed to Allâh asking Him to show the pagans one of the signs they asked for. Jibreel then came to the Prophet with Allâh's answer: the Prophet could choose between two options. The first choice was that the pagans would be given one of the signs they asked for on one condition: if they remained unbelievers after seeing the sign, they would be punished more severely than anyone else in the world. The second choice was that they would not be shown the signs they requested, but the door of repentance and mercy would remain open for them. The Prophet wisely told Jibreel: "The door of repentance and mercy should remain open."

The Qur'ân records Allâh's answer to the pagans who demanded that Muhammad ﷺ perform a spectacular miracle:

﴿قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي هَلْ كُنتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُولًا﴾ [النحل: ٩٣]

"Say: Glory to my Lord! Am I not but a man sent as a messenger?" (17:93)

This verse makes it clear that Muhammad ﷺ, like all prophets, had no power of his own to perform such miracles, but that Allâh determines when, where, and how His signs will be revealed. The prophets were given such signs to prove that they were messengers. Allâh says:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِندَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ [الأنعام: ١٠٩]

"Say: Certainly all signs are in the power of Allâh. But what will make you realize that even if they received a sign, they would not believe?" (6:109)

As for the pagans who demanded to see a clear sign, Allâh told the prophet in the Qur'ân:

﴿۞ وَلَوْ أَنَّنَا نَزَّلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَحَشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قُبُلًا مَّا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ﴾ [الأنعام: ١١١]

"Even if I send angels to them, and the dead speak to them face to face, and I gather together all things before their very eyes, they would not believe unless it be My wish. But most of them ignore the truth." (6:111)

And Allâh said:

﴿ وَلَوْ أَنَّ قُرْءَانًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ ٱلْجِبَالُ أَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ ٱلْأَرْضُ أَوْ كُلِّمَ بِهِ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ بَل لِّلَّهِ ٱلْأَمْرُ جَمِيعًا أَفَلَمْ يَاْيْـَٔسِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا أَن لَّوْ يَشَآءُ ٱللَّهُ لَهَدَى ٱلنَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ﴾ [الرعد: ٣١]

"If there were a Qur'ân with which mountains could be moved, or the earth rent asunder and the dead made to speak, it would be this one. Truly, the command rests with Allâh. Do the believers not know that had Allâh willed, He could have guided all mankind." (13:31)

In this way, Allâh instructed the Prophet ﷺ and the believers to stop trying to justify their faith. The onus was on the unbelievers to come to Islam. And how could they believe if Allâh, to whom guidance belonged, had not willed it?

The moon splits in half

The absence of any spectacular miracle such as they had demanded convinced the Quraysh that they had found Muhammad's weakness. Now they asked him to show them any sign. If Muhammad couldn't produce even a small sign, the Quraysh believed that it would show everyone that he was a false prophet. Muhammad would be silenced at last.

The Prophet ﷺ prayed to Allâh and asked Him to show the Quraysh a sign. Finally, Allâh gave the Quraysh clear evidence: the moon split in half so that each half appeared on either side of Mount Hira. "Be you all witnesses," the Prophet ﷺ said.

At first, the pagans could not believe what they saw. The moon had been split in two before their eyes. After the initial shock, however, they determined that it was nothing but the sorcery of

the son of Abu Kabsha. "Maybe he has put a spell on us, so let's wait until some travelers arrive in Makkah and ask them if they also saw it." As soon as some travelers arrived in Makkah, the Makkans asked them if they had seen the strange sight. The travelers confirmed they too had seen the wondrous sight of the cleft moon. Now there was no doubt about what they had witnessed, but the Quraysh stubbornly clutched their disbelief.

The Night Journey and Ascension

Perhaps two of the most significant and remarkable events in the Prophet's life were his "*Israa*" (Night Journey) and "*Mi'raaj*" (Ascension). "*Israa*" refers to how one night Allâh took Muhammad ﷺ from the *Ka'bah* to *Bait Al-Maqdis* (the "Sacred Mosque of Worship," i.e., Solomon's Temple) in Jerusalem, and "*Mi'raaj*" refers to the Prophet's actual ascension to heaven from Jerusalem.

The Prophet's "*Israa*" is mentioned in the Qur'ân in the following verse:

﴿ سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِى
بَٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ﴾ [الإسراء: ١]

> "Glory to Allâh who took His slave on a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque whose precincts I did bless, in order that I might show him some of My signs. Verily, Allâh hears and sees all things." (17:1)

Some sources indicate that the "*Mi'raaj*" (Ascension) is also described in *Surah Al-Najm* from the seventh to the eighteenth verse. There is a difference of opinion concerning when the "*Israa*" and "*Mi'raaj*" occurred. Some sources place the event in the first year of prophethood, while others place it in the fifth year. Other sources indicate that it took place on Rajab 27, during the tenth year of prophethood, or Ramadan 17, during the twelfth year of prophethood, or in Muharram or Rabi' Al-Awwal in the thirteenth year of prophethood.

The story of the Prophet's Night Journey and Ascension is both beautiful and instructive. It began when the angel Jibreel ﷺ descended on the *Ka'bah* with a "*Buraq*"—an animal bigger than an ass and smaller than a donkey, that could travel to the farthest horizon with one stride. The Prophet ﷺ and Jibreel rode the *Buraq* to the Sacred Mosque of Worship in Jerusalem. Once there, the Prophet tethered the animal outside the mosque where former prophets had tied their mounts.

The Prophet ﷺ entered the mosque to find assembled there all the previous prophets, whom he then led in prayer. Jibreel brought two vessels to the Prophet, one filled with wine, the other with milk. The Prophet chose the second vessel. Jibreel commented on the Prophet's choice:

> "You chose milk in accordance with the purity of your nature. Hence you have received guidance and your followers have too. Had you chosen wine, your followers would have been astray."

The Prophet ﷺ was then taken to the first level of heaven, which was the first stage of his Ascension. Jibreel asked for the door to be opened for the Prophet, and there stood Adam ﷺ, the first man and prophet. Adam said, "Peace be upon you," to which the Prophet responded, "And upon you be peace." Adam then testified that Muhammad ﷺ was the Prophet of Allâh. Adam looked to his right and smiled, and then looked to his left and wept. The Prophet saw two groups of people on either side of Adam, and the ones he smiled at were the believers, while the ones that caused him to weep were unbelievers.

The Prophet was then escorted to the second level of heaven. Jibreel asked for the door to be opened, and there the Prophet ﷺ saw two cousins, the prophets Yahya bin Zakariya (John, son of Zechariah) and Isa bin Maryam (Jesus, son of Mary). The Prophet greeted them and they returned the greeting, and then they testified that Muhammad was Allâh's Prophet.

On the third level of heaven, the Prophet ﷺ met Yusuf (Joseph) عليه السلام. After an exchange of greetings, Yusuf also testified that Muhammad was Allâh's Prophet.

The Prophet ﷺ met Idrees عليه السلام on the fourth level of heaven. Both prophets exchanged greetings, and Idrees testified that Muhammad was the Prophet of Allâh.

The fifth level of heaven was where the Prophet ﷺ met Haroon (Aaron), who, like all the previous prophets, exchanged greetings and testified that Muhammad was Allâh's Prophet.

Musa (Moses) عليه السلام awaited the Prophet on the sixth level of heaven. After greeting the Prophet and testifying that Muhammad was indeed a Prophet, Musa began to weep. When he was asked why he was weeping, he said: "The reason for my tears is that a youth was commissioned as prophet after me, but his followers will enter heaven in greater numbers than mine."

When the Prophet ﷺ reached the seventh level of heaven, he met Ibraheem (Abraham) عليه السلام resting against *Bait Al-Ma'mur*, a celestial house of worship which seventy thousand different angels circumambulate every day. The Prophet Ibraheem returned the greeting of his descendant and testified that Muhammad was the Prophet of Allâh.

At this point, the Prophet ﷺ was then led up to *Sidrat Al-Muntaha,* a tree of Paradise. Its leaves were the size of an elephant's ears, and its fruits the size of small pitchers. It was covered by golden moths, and no words can describe its beauty.

The Prophet ﷺ was then brought before Allâh the Almighty. Since no human eyes could take in the majesty of Allâh, the Prophet ﷺ could not actually look upon Allâh, but he stood in close proximity to Him. Allâh informed the Prophet that it was now obligatory for his followers to perform prayers fifty times a day. The Prophet ﷺ was then led away by Jibreel. Musa, however, halted the Prophet and asked him what Allâh had

commanded. “Fifty prayers a day,” the Prophet said.

“Your followers are not strong enough. Go back to your Lord and ask Him to make it lighter,” Musa advised. The Prophet looked at Jibreel who said, “You may do so if you so desire.”

The Prophet ﷺ returned to Allâh and did as he had been advised. Allâh reduced the obligatory number of prayers from fifty to ten. Again the Prophet was led away and once again Musa stopped him. Upon hearing that the number had been reduced to ten, he advised the Prophet to ask for another reduction. Allâh reduced the number to five. When Musa learned of this, he again advised the Prophet to ask Allâh to reduce the number. The Children of Israel, Musa said, were asked to do less, but still they were unable to carry out their duties. The Prophet ﷺ did not intend to return another time. “I feel ashamed before my Lord,” he said. A voice then announced: “I have enforced My obligation and made it light for My servants. He who prays these five prayers will be rewarded as if he had prayed fifty. What I decree cannot be changed.”

The Prophet ﷺ returned to Makkah before dawn, and the next morning he told the people about his miraculous journey and ascension to heaven. The Makkan pagans, of course, scoffed at his claim. Some ran to Abu Bakr and told him the story, thinking that it would shake his faith in the Prophet. “If he said so,” Abu Bakr ؓ said, “it must be true.” Abu Bakr’s answer as to why he believed is inspiring to all generations of Muslims. Since he had believed the Prophet was indeed a prophet, one to whom an angel brought revelations from Allâh, Lord of the worlds, why should he not also believe the Prophet’s account of his travel through space and time? From that day onward, Abu Bakr ؓ was called “*Siddeeq*,” one who believes.

In an attempt to prove that Muhammad was lying, those Makkans who were familiar with Jerusalem and the Sacred Mosque of Worship there quizzed him about his journey. The Prophet described everything in detail, and no one could fault his

description. Additionally, the Prophet told the Makkans about a caravan traveling from Jerusalem to Makkah, mentioning the number of camels, their condition, and the time that they would arrive in Makkah. The caravan from Jerusalem appeared exactly when the Prophet ﷺ said it would, and everyone saw that his description was accurate. But the pagans remained fettered to their disbelief.

That same morning Jibreel descended and taught the Prophet ﷺ how to perform the five daily prayers. Following Jibreel's visit, the Muslims began praying five times each day instead of praying morning and evening.

Various tribes are invited to Islam

Once again it was time for the Prophet ﷺ to take Allâh's message to the people outside Makkah. Tribes from all over Arabia would journey to Ukaz, Mujanna and Dhul Majaz where three huge fairs were held each year. The fair at Ukaz, a village between Nakhlah and Tâ'if, lasted the first twenty days of the month of Dhul Qa'dah. Then the tribes would move to Mujanna and set up markets there. Finally, during the first eight days of Dhul Hijjah, markets were set up in Dhul Majaz, behind Jabal Rahmah on the plain of Arafah. The people would perform the *Hajj*, or pilgrimage, rites following the last fair.

Taking the opportunity of finding a large audience, the Prophet approached various tribes with his message of Allâh's Oneness and his own prophethood. Those invited to Islam were Banu Amir bin Sasa'a, Banu Fazara, Ghassan, Murra, Banu Hanifa, Banu Sulaym, Banu Abs, Banu Nasar, Banu Al-Baka'a, Kinda, Kalb, Banu Al-Harith bin Ka'b, Udhrah and Hadharma. None of these tribes accepted the Prophet's invitation, but they responded in different ways. Some of them declined politely, some asked him to appoint them as his successors after his death, some pointed out that most of the Prophet's kinsmen and tribesmen had refused to follow him, and some resorted to insults. Banu

Haneefa, the tribe of Musaylimah Al-Kaddhab, or Musaylimah the Liar (who was later to pose as a prophet himself), was especially disrespectful to the Prophet ﷺ.

Seeds of faith sprout outside Makkah

Although the vast majority of Makkan pagans rejected the Prophet ﷺ, a few people outside Makkah embraced Islam. Some of them are mentioned below:

Suwayd bin Samit: A poet from Yathrib (the modern day Madinah), Suwayd came to Makkah to perform pilgrimage. When the Prophet ﷺ invited him to Islam, Suwayd recited some of his own verses to the Prophet. In response, the Prophet ﷺ recited some verses of the Qur'ân. Declaring, "I have never heard such sublime words," Suwayd embraced Islam. He was killed in the fighting between the Aus and the Khazraj.

Ayas bin Mu'adh: He was also from Yathrib, and came to Makkah in the eleventh year of the Prophet's mission. He was a deputy from the tribe of Aus and came to Makkah seeking assistance against the rival Khazraj tribe. The Prophet ﷺ invited Ayas to Islam and recited some Qur'ânic verses for him. When Ayas heard the Prophet ﷺ recite, he told the other delegation members, "By God, this is better than what we have come here for." His fellow tribesman Abul Husayr threw pebbles in Ayas's face and snapped: "Leave it! We have come here with a different purpose." The chastened Ayas fell silent. Upon his return to Yathrib, Ayas fell seriously ill. His praise and glorification of Allâh just before he died left little doubt about his conversion to Islam.

Abu Dhar Ghifari: He had heard about the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through Suwayd bin Samit and Ayas bin Mu'adh and was interested in knowing more. He sent his brother to Makkah to find out more about the Prophet's character, but upon his brother's return from Makkah, Abu Dhar was not satisfied with his brother's account of the Prophet's message. Accordingly, he

decided to go to Makkah himself. Abu Dhar reached Makkah, but fearing for his life, he did not ask about the Prophet. At last, Ali took him to the Prophet ﷺ who then described the tenets of Islam to him. Convinced at what he heard, Abu Dhar became Muslim.

His heart now full of courage and faith, Abu Dhar went to the Ka'bah to announce that he had embraced Islam. The Quraysh responded by beating him, and only the intervention of Abbas ؓ, the Prophet's uncle, saved him from being killed. The next day Abu Dhar repeated his announcement at the *Ka'bah*, and once again Abbas had to rescue him from the Quraysh. Abu Dhar then returned to his tribe, Banu Ghifar, and left them only when he migrated to Madinah with other Muslims.

Tufayl bin Amr Dausi: He was a prominent poet and a chieftain of the Daus tribe that lived on the outskirts of Yemen. Eleven years after the Prophet ﷺ began his mission, Tufayl visited Makkah only to be warned by the Quraysh about the danger of Muhammad's bewitching words. Tufayl went to the *Ka'bah* with cotton stuffed in his ears as a precaution against the Prophet's preaching. He arrived at the *Ka'bah* to find the Prophet ﷺ performing his prayers nearby. Overcome by curiosity, Tufayl decided to listen to Muhammad's recitation. "I am a poet with a trained ear. I can determine if what Muhammad says is true or false. Only if his words are good shall I accept what he says." He was amazed by the Prophet's recitation.

Tufayl then followed the Prophet ﷺ home and asked him to explain Islam to him. After the Prophet did so, Tufayl embraced Islam. He then told the Prophet that his people trusted him and would listen to what he had to say, and that he would invite them to Islam. He asked the Prophet ﷺ to give him a sign by which the people would recognize the truth of his words. The Prophet prayed to Allâh to give him such a sign, and when Tufayl went back to his people his face was radiant. His people were reluctant to accept Islam, but his father and wife readily became Muslim. By the time he migrated to Madinah, however, seventy or eighty

families from his tribe had accepted Islam, and they accompanied him on the journey to Madinah.

Dhimad Azdi: A skilled exorcist, he hailed from the Azd Shanwah tribe of Yemen. When he came to Makkah, he heard a rumor that Muhammad ﷺ was insane. He then approached the Prophet ﷺ and offered to cure him. The Prophet responded by saying: "All praise be to Allâh. We glorify Him and seek His help. He whom Allâh has guided cannot be misled, and he whom Allâh has led astray cannot be guided. I bear witness that there is no god except Allâh, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger."

Dhimad was so impressed with the Prophet's speech that he repeated it thrice and said, "I have heard the speeches of sorcerers, soothsayers and poets, but never before have I heard anything like this." He then asked the Prophet ﷺ to extend his hand so that he could pledge his allegiance to him.

Six pilgrims from Yathrib: These six men from the Khazraj tribe of Yathrib were Asad bin Zurara, Auf bin Harith bin Rifaa (Auf bin Ifra'a), Rafi bin Malik bin Ailan, Qatba bin Amir Hadida, Uqba bin Amir bin Nabi, and Jabir bin Abdullah bin Riqab. They had come along with other pilgrims from Yathrib to Makkah in the eleventh year of the Prophet's mission. Yathrib was also home to some Jewish tribes, and occasionally disputes would flare up between the Arabs and Jews. The Jewish minority would intimidate the Arabs by saying that soon a prophet would be sent to lead the Jews in battle. The Arabs, they claimed, would be slaughtered like the people of Aad and Iram.

These six pilgrims were sitting together in Mina (just outside Makkah) one night when the Prophet ﷺ passed by. He approached them and asked, "Who are you?"

"We belong to the Khazraj," they answered.

"Allies of the Jews," the Prophet ﷺ commented. They replied in the

affirmative. "Let us sit together and talk," the Prophet ﷺ suggested. He spoke to them about Islam, recited some verses of the Qur'ân, and invited them to believe in Allâh, the One, the Exalted.

The men sitting with the Prophet recognized who he was. "This is the same prophet the Jews constantly threaten us with. Let us pledge allegiance to him before they do." All six men accepted Islam. "We left our people in such a plight," they said. "If Allâh unites us through you, you would be honored more than anyone else among us." The six new Muslims promised that they would invite their people to Islam upon returning to Yathrib, and that they would meet the Prophet ﷺ again during the next pilgrimage.

First pledge of Aqabah

The next year five of the six men from Yathrib returned to meet the Prophet ﷺ during *Hajj*. They brought with them five converts from their own tribe and two from the tribe of Aus. The names of the five converts of the Khazraj tribe were Mu'adh bin Harith (Mu'adh bin Ifra'a), Zakwan bin Abdul Qays, Ubada bin Samit, Yazeed bin Thulba, and Abbas bin Ubada bin Fadhla. The two men from the Aus tribe were Abul Haytham bin Al-Tayhan and Uwaym bin Sa'eda.

Again, they met the Prophet ﷺ in Mina, where he taught them more about Islam and asked them to take an oath of allegiance. This was known as the First Pledge of Aqabah. Specifically, it was a pact between the men and Allâh that they would not associate any partners with Allâh, commit theft, fornicate, kill their children, vilify others, nor disobey the Prophet ﷺ when he instructed them to do good. Whoever fulfilled this pledge would receive his reward from Allâh, and whoever violated any part of it and was proven guilty would be punished in this world as an atonement. If, however, someone broke the pledge and Allâh hid his sin from people, that person would be dealt with by Allâh, Who would either forgive or punish him.

Islam spreads in Yathrib

When the men who took the pledge at Aqabah finished performing *Hajj*, the Prophet sent Mus'ab bin Umayr along with them to teach them the Qur'ân. In Yathrib, Mus'ab stayed with Abu Umama Asad bin Zurara. The two directed their efforts towards teaching non-Muslims about Islam. One day as Umayr and Abu Umama sat in an orchard, Sa'd bin Mu'adh, the chieftain of the Aus tribe, spotted them. He said to his cousin, Usayd bin Hudhayr, "Go and rebuke those two who have come to deceive our weak." Weapon in hand, Usayd approached the two Muslims. Asad saw him and warned Mus'ab, "Here comes a chieftain."

"Why are you here?" Usayd thundered. "Do you intend to deceive our weak? Keep away if you value your life!"

Mus'ab was not intimidated. "Why don't you sit and listen? If you like what we say, accept it; if you dislike it, don't."

"That sounds fair," said Usayd cautiously. He put away his weapon and sat down. Mus'ab explained the basic principles of Islam and then recited some verses of the Qur'ân. Usayd found himself agreeing with everything Mus'ab said, so he embraced Islam. He then returned to Sa'd bin Mu'adh, who now had to be convinced. "I talked to them," Usayd said to Sa'd carefully, "and found nothing objectionable in what they say. Still, I forbade them to talk to anyone else. By the way, I managed to find out that the Banu Haritha are planning to kill Asad bin Zurara because he is your cousin. They want to break the covenant."

Usayd's ploy worked. Sa'd became angry and made his way to Mus'ab and Asad. Mus'ab told him the same thing he had told Usayd, and Sa'd agreed to listen. When Mus'ab finished explaining the principles of Islam, Sa'd too became Muslim. His love for the Prophet and his faith made him one of the more distinguished Companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

His new faith surging in his heart, Sa'd returned to his people

and said, "O Banu Abdul Ash'hal! What do you know about me as a man among you?"

They answered in one voice: "You are our chief and the wisest man among us!"

Sa'd said, "Well, I will not talk to the families of those who do not believe in Allâh and his Prophet." As a result of this, every man and women in the tribe became Muslim except for Usayram, who became Muslim during the Battle of Uhud. He was martyred in the battle before he had even performed one prostration as a Muslim.

Mus'ab bin Umayr returned to Makkah before the next *Hajj*. His account of how Allâh had guided the people of Yathrib to Islam delighted the Prophet ﷺ immensely.

The second pledge of Aqabah

In the thirteenth year of the Prophet's mission, many pilgrims from Yathrib made their way to Makkah, Muslims and pagans alike. The Muslims wanted to meet with the Prophet ﷺ, and invite him to move to Yathrib. The harassment, abuse and fear that overshadowed the Prophet and his followers in Makkah had dismayed the Muslims of Yathrib, who resolved to offer the Prophet their loyal protection if he moved there. They arranged a secret meeting with him late one night at Aqabah after the *Hajj*.

To keep their meeting a secret from the Makkan pagans, the seventy-three Muslims from Yathrib sneaked out to Aqabah, some in pairs, some alone, to make what was to be known as the Second Pledge of Aqabah. All but eleven were from the Khazraj tribe. Two women were present as well—Nasiba bint Ka'b from Banu Najjar and Asmaa bint Amr from Banu Salamah. The Prophet ﷺ was accompanied by his uncle, Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, who, though not Muslim at the time, was concerned about his nephew's welfare. Abbas began by saying, "The Prophet ﷺ has both security and honor in Makkah. If you cannot guarantee to protect him in Yathrib, then let him remain in Makkah."

Baraa bin Marur ﷺ spoke for the Muslims of Yathrib: "We are determined to offer our loyalty to the Prophet ﷺ and sacrifice ourselves for him, and we are willing to make a covenant to this effect."

The Prophet ﷺ recited some Verses of the Qur'ân and had the men from Yathrib take the following oath:

> "We will worship none but Allâh, and we will never Associate any partner with Him."
>
> "We will obey the Prophet."
>
> "We will give of our wealth freely in prosperity and in poverty."
>
> "We will counsel others to do good deeds and instruct them to refrain from evil."
>
> "We will serve Allâh, even when others show contempt."
>
> "We will protect the Prophet as we protect our women and children."

Additionally, according to Ubada, the Yathrib Muslims also pledged not to disobey those in authority. Baraa bin Marur took the Prophet's hand and said, "I swear by the One Who has sent you with the Truth, we shall certainly protect you as we do our families. By Allâh! We are sons of battle and weapons are our toys. This is what we have inherited from our ancestors."

Abul Haytham bin Al-Tayhan then said, "O Prophet! We are bound to our people by a covenant, and by pledging loyalty to you, we are about to cut off all our old ties. If success comes to you and you should conquer Makkah, will you return to Makkah then and leave us defenseless?"

The Prophet ﷺ smiled and said, "No! Blood is blood, and destruction is destruction. I am of you, and you are of me. I will wage war against those who make war upon you, and be at peace with those who are at peace with you."

"You all know what you are agreeing to," Abbas warned. "All of you are pledging to go to war. So, what will you do if you lose all your wealth and property, and all your leaders are killed? Will you abandon the Prophet? If so, let him stay here in Makkah, because if you forsake him it will be a disgrace in this world and the next. However, if you stand by him even in the face of destruction, you will find a reward in this world and the next."

The Yathrib Muslims listened to Abbas and then vowed that they would support the Prophet ﷺ no matter how great the risks involved. Someone then asked the Prophet, "Tell me, O Prophet! What will we get in exchange for all this?"

"Paradise," the Prophet ﷺ replied simply.

"Give us your hand," the people said.

Asad bin Zurara then took the Prophet's hand in his and addressed the gathering:

> "O people of Yathrib, after a long journey we have found the Prophet of God. Taking his hand means incurring the enmity of all the Arabs, the deaths of our chiefs in his defense, and the clash of swords. If you are prepared for this, take the Prophet's hand, and with Allâh lies the reward. If, however, you have any reservations, forsake him now."

Unswerving in their faith, the assembly cried out, "Remove your hand, Asad. We are ready to clasp the Prophet's hand."

Some sources indicate that Asad bin Zurara was the first to take the oath, while others name Abul Haytham bin Al-Tayhan and Baraa bin Marur as the first. The two women present took the oath without shaking hands.

Twelve chiefs

After everyone had taken the oath of allegiance, the Prophet ﷺ asked the people to select twelve men who would be responsible for the affairs of the community. Nine members of the Khazraj

tribe were chosen along with three from the Aus tribe.

The nine Khazraj chiefs were Sa'd bin Ubada bin Daleem, Asad bin Zurara bin Ads, Sa'd bin Rabi'a bin Amr, Abdullah bin Rawaha bin Thulba, Rafi bin Malik bin Ajlan, Baraa bin Marur bin Sakhar, Abdullah bin Amr bin Haram, Ubada bin Samit bin Qays, and Mundhir bin Amr bin Khanis. The three chiefs from the Aus tribe were Usayd bin Hudhayr bin Samak, Sa'd bin Khathima bin Harith, and Rifaah bin Abdul Mundhir bin Zubayr (other sources mention Abul Haytham bin Al-Tayhan as well).

After these twelve were elected, the Prophet ﷺ said to them, "You are like the apostles of Isa [Jesus] عليه السلام. You are responsible for the community [in Yathrib] while I am the caretaker of the entire body of Muslims."

Just as the people were about to disperse, a strange voice was heard calling out: "O men of the camp! Will you not deal with Muhammad? Right now disbelief has prevailed and he and his followers are preparing to fight you." The Prophet ﷺ knew that it was a demon speaking. He called back, "O enemy of Allâh! Soon I will deal with you." The Prophet ﷺ then told the Muslims to return quietly to their beds as day was about to break.

The next morning the Quraysh, having heard a rumor about the pledge at Aqabah, went to the Yathrib camp to protest against what had happened. They resented their visitors' patronage of someone they deemed to be an outcast, and voiced their displeasure about any contact between the contingent from Yathrib and the Prophet ﷺ. The polytheists of Yathrib, who knew nothing about the event, insisted nothing had taken place, while the Muslims kept silent. The Quraysh reluctantly accepted the polytheists' reassurances and returned home.

Later, however, the Quraysh found out that the rumor was in fact true. Infuriated, they sent their horsemen to apprehend any who took part in the pledge, and at Adhaker they captured Sa'd bin Ubada and Mundhir bin Amr. While Mundhir bin Amr managed

to escape, Sa'd was bound and taken to Makkah. The Muslims from Yathrib planned to raid Makkah in order to free their brother Muslim. Before they could carry out their plans, however, Sa'd was freed by two Makkans, Mut'im bin Adiy and Harith bin Harb, whose caravans Sa'd protected in Yathrib. Sa'd rejoined the others, and they all returned home safely.

The Muslims migrate to Madinah

The Second Pledge of Aqabah had changed the equation considerably for the Muslims. They now had a new refuge in Yathrib, and its people were ready to protect them. Soon the Prophet ﷺ himself received revelation about migration to Yathrib. He told his Companions, "I have been informed that we will one day migrate from Makkah to a land of dates. I think that it is either Yamama or Hijr." On another occasion he said, "I have been shown the place to which you will migrate. It lies between two hills of lava. It is either Hijr or Yathrib."

Taking advantage of this new haven that had been offered to them, several Muslims migrated to Yathrib following the pledge. The first emigrant was Abu Salamah Makhzoomi ﷺ, the husband of Umm Salamah رضى الله عنها. He attempted to migrate with his wife and children a year before the Second Pledge of Aqabah, but his clan would not allow him to take his family, so he was forced to migrate by himself to Yathrib. A year later Umm Salamah was allowed to join her husband.

Amir bin Rabi'a, his wife Layla bint Abi Hathma, and Abdullah bin Umm Maktoom migrated after Abu Salamah. Getting away proved difficult though, because they had to slip out of Makkah past the watchful Quraysh. Umar bin Khattab, however, left Makkah in full view of the Quraysh, and no one dared to try to stop him. He also took twenty others with him.

Soon, nearly all the Muslims in Makkah had migrated to Yathrib. Even the refugees in Abyssinia made their way there after hearing about the pledge at Aqabah. However, Abu Bakr, Ali,

Suhayb and Zayd bin Haritha رضـي الله عنـهم stayed in Makkah together with those Muslims who were unable to migrate. The Prophet ﷺ stayed on in Makkah as well, awaiting Allâh's permission to leave. He asked Abu Bakr ﷺ to wait with him. Abu Bakr had two very fast camels, and he would feed them acacia leaves to make them even stronger and swifter. This way he and the Prophet ﷺ could make a speedy escape, once Allâh's command to leave Makkah came.

The council of Dar al-Nadwah

The Quraysh were enraged that the Muslims had found a place in the Arabian peninsula itself where they would be able to thrive. They also feared that the Muslims would become strong enough to control the northern trade routes and disrupt the pagans' trade. Since the Makkans depended on the goods carried by caravans to and from northern Arabia and Syria, their fear was not unfounded. There was also the growing worry that the Prophet ﷺ himself might escape any day to Yathrib, where his followers awaited him, and that he would set up a new power base, an eventuality which had to be avoided.

To discuss their concerns, a special council was held at Dar Al-Nadwah. Most of the prominent chieftains of the Quraysh were present. Iblees (Satan) was also present disguised as Shaikh Jaleel of Najd.

Abul Aswad opened the meeting by saying: "Let us drive Muhammad out of our territory and be rid of him. That will set the matter right."

Shaikh Jaleel didn't like this idea. "Do you not see how sweet his words are, and how he wins the hearts of people? If we exile him, he will simply find another tribe and make them his followers. With their help, he will attack your city and deal with you as he pleases. Think of another plan."

"Let us imprison him until he dies. He will experience the same kind of death poets of old did," Abu Bukhtari suggested.

Shaikh Jaleel interjected again, "By God, if you make him a captive, the news will surely reach his companions who love him more than their fathers and sons. They might raid your territory and free him. Once their numbers increase, they will return and conquer you! Think of another plan."

Finally, Abu Jahl, himself a rival of Satan, put forth his idea. "I have my own opinion," he began.

> "I see that none of you has touched on it so far. We should select a strong and smart youth of noble birth from each tribe. Each youth will be given a sword, sharp and deadly. These young men will move toward the Prophet as one man and strike him as one man. Since all the clans will share his blood, Banu Abdu Munaf, Muhammad's protectors, cannot take on all the Quraysh at one time. They will then have to accept blood money that we can pay off easily."

"This is the best plan of all," Shaikh Jaleel declared approvingly. The council disbanded, relieved at having a solution at hand. Now it was time to make the necessary preparations.

Jibreel عليه السلام brings the Prophet ﷺ happy news

Meanwhile, Jibreel came to the Prophet ﷺ with the tidings that Allâh had ordered the Prophet to migrate. Jibreel told him the exact time he should depart and informed the Prophet of the plot to assassinate him. "Don't sleep in the bed you usually sleep in," he advised the Prophet ﷺ.

At noon, when everyone was napping, the Prophet ﷺ went to the house of Abu Bakr Siddeeq رضي الله عنه and told him the happy news. Quickly, they began to prepare both camels for the long journey. They also hired Abdullah bin Urayqat Laythi to lead them to Yathrib. Abdullah knew the area between Makkah and Yathrib well, and although he was not Muslim, he agreed to escort the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه secretly. The Prophet told Abdullah to meet them near Mount Thawr in three nights. Meanwhile, the Prophet ﷺ began to engage himself in day to day activities so that

no one would suspect that he was about to leave Makkah.

The Prophet ﷺ used to go to sleep after the evening prayer, and upon waking up around midnight he would go to the *Ka'bah* to perform supplementary (*Tahajjud*) prayers. The night the Prophet was to leave, he asked Ali ؓ to sleep in his bed after assuring him that no harm would come to him. When everyone had gone to bed, the assassins surrounded the Prophet's house. They saw Ali wrapped in the Prophet's green mantle, lying in the Prophet's bed, and thought that he was Muhammad ﷺ. The plan was for them to lie in wait for the Prophet ﷺ and fall upon him when he came out of his house. The Quraysh were unaware that just as they were plotting, Allâh too was plotting:

﴿ وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ﴾ [الأنفال : ٣٠]

> "Remember how the unbelievers plotted against you to imprison you, to kill you, or to exile you from Makkah. They plot and plan, but Allâh plans too, and the best of planners is Allâh." (8:30)

The Prophet ﷺ leaves home

Although Ali ؓ was in the Prophet's bed, the Prophet ﷺ himself was still in the house surrounded by the assassins. The Prophet ﷺ came out of his house and took a handful of dust which he sprinkled above the young boys' heads while reciting the following verse:

﴿ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ﴾

[يس : ٩]

> "I have placed a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them. I have covered them so that they cannot see." (36:9)

The youths outside did not see the Prophet ﷺ leave. He went swiftly to Abu Bakr ؓ, and together they traveled, not toward

Yathrib, but in the opposite direction toward Yemen. Before dawn, they had covered a distance of about five miles, and then they took refuge in a cave on Mount Thawr.

Unaware of the Prophet's escape, the would-be assassins continued to wait for him to come out of his house. Only at dawn when Ali awoke and came out did they realize that they had been tricked. They interrogated Ali about the Prophet's whereabouts, but he pleaded ignorance. They then dragged him to the *Ka'bah* and kept him captive there, but he divulged nothing. Then they rushed to Abu Bakr's house and found that he had also disappeared. However, they did find his daughter, Asmaa, who refused to tell them anything. Her calm defiance enraged them, and a furious Abu Jahl slapped her so hard that her ear ring flew from her ear.

The Quraysh began searching for the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr and announced that there was a reward of one hundred camels for each fugitive brought back dead or alive.

Three nights in the cave

When the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr arrived at the cave on Mount Thawr, Abu Bakr entered first to clear away anything that might injure the Prophet ﷺ. He found a few holes and stuffed them with pieces of cloth. The Prophet ﷺ then entered and went to sleep with his head on Abu Bakr's lap. Suddenly, something stung Abu Bakr's foot, but he did not even twitch, fearing he would wake the Prophet. The pain was so intense that tears began to run down his cheeks and onto the Prophet's face. The Prophet woke up and saw that Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه was in pain. He then applied his spittle on the injury and the pain disappeared.

For three consecutive nights the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه .remained hidden in the cave. During this period, Abu Bakr's son, Abdullah, would pass his nights nearby. The clever young man would return to Makkah so early in the morning that the Quraysh had no idea that he had slept elsewhere. Each day in Makkah he

collected information about the activities of the Quraysh, and each night he updated the Prophet and Abu Bakr.

Abu Bakr's slave, Amir bin Fuhayra ﷺ, would graze Abu Bakr's goats near the cave so that both men could drink fresh milk. Early the next morning Amir would drive the goats back to Makkah along the same route that Abu Bakr's son took, to obscure his footprints.

Meanwhile the search party scoured the area south of Makkah where the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr were hiding. Once the Quraysh even came upon the mouth of the cave, and had they looked down while standing at the edge of the cave, they would have surely found the men they were hunting. With the Quraysh so close to discovering their hiding place, Abu Bakr ﷺ became very tense about the Prophet's safety. The Prophet reassured him, "How can you be apprehensive about two with whom is a third, especially when the third one is Allâh?"

On the way to Madinah

On the first night of Rabi' Al-Awwal, Abdullah bin Urayqat Laythi, the guide hired by the Prophet ﷺ to take them to Yathrib, arrived in the valley of Mount Thawr with Abu Bakr's two camels. Abu Bakr's slave, Amir bin Fuhayra, accompanied them. The guide first headed south toward Yemen, and then led the small group westward toward the Red Sea. Before reaching the sea, he veered north toward Yathrib, taking a seldom-traveled route.

They journeyed all night and half of the next day. Then they stopped, and the Prophet ﷺ rested in the shade beneath a rock. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr found a herdsman who let him milk one of his goats. When the Prophet ﷺ awoke, Abu Bakr gave him fresh milk. Then they pushed ahead.

Perhaps it was the next day that the Prophet and Abu Bakr passed by the tent of Umm Ma'bad on the outskirts of Qadid, near Mashaal, about 130 km from Makkah. They asked her

whether she had anything for four weary travelers. She apologized, saying her goats were grazing far away, and the only one at hand was a small goat that was unable to stay with the herd and didn't have a drop of milk to give.

The Prophet ﷺ asked for permission to milk it, and when he did, milk flowed from its udders. He filled a large bowl with milk and first let her drink. After that, each of the travelers drank their fill. When they had all finished, he milked the goat again and left the bowl full of milk for the woman.

After they resumed their journey, the woman's husband returned. Umm Ma'bad told him what had happened, and she gave him such a complete description of the travelers that her husband exclaimed, "That was the man from the Quraysh that I've been hearing about. If I ever have the opportunity, I will join his followers."

On the third morning after the Prophet's departure, the Makkans heard a voice echo through the streets. They were unable to find where it was coming from because it was not the voice of a human. It was a jinni (a spirit) saying:

> "Allâh, Lord of the people, bless those two companions who reached the tent of Umm Ma'bad. In safety, they broke their journey, and in safety they resumed it. Anyone who befriends Muhammad finds success. O Quraysh! By driving Muhammad away, you have forfeited glory and dominion! Blessed is the tribe Banu Ka'b! Their lady's tent became a refuge for Muhammad. Ask your lady about the weak goat and the milking bowl. The goat will also inform you if you ask it.

When the Prophet and his Companions left Qadid, a man by the name of Surąqá bin Malik bin Ju'shum Madlaji spotted them. He thought he would capture the fugitives and take them back to Makkah to collect the reward. As he charged ahead on his horse, it suddenly stumbled and he fell to the ground. Being

superstitious, he drew an arrow to see how favorable the situation was. The arrow he drew was unfavorable, but, greedy for the bounty, he ignored the omen and mounted the horse again. This time his horse carried him close enough to the fugitives that he could hear the Prophet ﷺ reciting the Qur'ân. Abu Bakr nervously looked back, but the Prophet was unconcerned. This time the forelegs of the horse sank into the sand, and again the rider tumbled to the ground.

Suraqa cursed the horse, and with great difficulty he managed to pull the horse's legs out of the sand. But when he looked behind, he saw dust rising from the horse's hoof prints like smoke. He quickly pulled out another arrow to find yet another bad omen. Now he was convinced that he would not be able to capture the Prophet ﷺ. He then called to the Prophet ﷺ and surrendered. The travelers stopped and waited for him to come forward. Suraqa offered them food, but they refused his rations. The Prophet ﷺ did, however, ask him not to tell the Quraysh of their whereabouts. Suraqa agreed, and asked to be given a letter of safe conduct for future security. The Prophet ﷺ asked Amir to write the letter on a piece of tanned leather.

Suraqa then returned toward Makkah. He told all of the bounty hunters he met to go back because he had already searched the area and the fugitives were nowhere to be found.

The four travelers resumed their journey, and on the way, the Prophet ﷺ soon met Burida bin Husayb Aslami along with seventy or eighty families of his followers. They all embraced Islam and prayed the evening prayer with the Prophet. Burida migrated to Madinah after the Battle of Uhud.

The Prophet ﷺ also met Abu Tamim Aus bin Hajr Aslami at Arj. At the time the Prophet and Abu Bakr were riding the same camel because one of their camels had become weak. Abu Tamim offered them a camel and sent along a slave named Mas'ood bin Hanida who accompanied them all the way to

Yathrib. Although Abu Tamim became Muslim, he chose to remain in Arj. He would later prove useful to the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud by sending word through Mas'ood, the slave, about the Makkans' advance toward Madinah.

When the Prophet ﷺ reached the valley of Reem, he met Zubayr bin Awwam ؓ, who was accompanying a trade caravan of Muslims returning from Syria. He presented the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr ؓ with sheets of white cloth.

Arrival in Qubaa

Fourteen years after becoming a prophet, on a Monday, the Prophet ﷺ arrived in Qubaa on the outskirts of Yathrib.

The people of Yathrib (which was later named Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, the City of Light) had long awaited the Prophet ﷺ, and each day they would go to Hira and wait for him until the sun became unbearable. One day the people returned to their homes after waiting a long time for the Prophet. A Jew happened to catch a glimpse of a small group of white-robed travelers in the distance. He called out: "O people of Arabia! What you have been waiting for has arrived!"

The Muslims lifted their weapons and rushed to greet the Prophet ﷺ. There was a great tumult as everyone ran to the edge of the desert to catch a glimpse of the travelers. The Prophet ﷺ then turned towards the right and came to Banu Amr bin Auf at Qubaa.

After reaching Qubaa, the Prophet ﷺ dismounted and sat in silence. Now those of the *Ansar* (literally *the supporters*, the name given to those in Al-Madinah who became Muslim) who had not seen the Prophet ﷺ thought that Abu Bakr ؓ was the prophet because his hair had grown a little gray. But when they saw Abu Bakr shade the Prophet ﷺ with a sheet, they realized their mistake.

The Prophet ﷺ stayed at Qubaa in the house of Kulthoom bin Hadam. Other sources, however, say that he stayed in the house of Sa'd bin Khathima. He stayed there for four days, during which time

he laid the foundation of Qubaa Mosque. That Friday he left Qubaa with Abu Bakr ﷺ. He sent a message to Banu Najjar, the house of his maternal grandfather. His kinsmen came to Qubaa with their swords hanging from their sides, and joined the Prophet ﷺ on his way to Madinah. When he arrived at the settlement of Banu Salim bin Auf, it was time to perform the Friday congregational prayer. The Prophet ﷺ led a hundred Muslims in prayer.

The Prophet ﷺ enters Madinah

After performing the Friday prayer, the Prophet ﷺ and his entourage left for Madinah. Jubilant crowds of men, women and children greeted him, and the narrow lanes of Madinah resounded with their happy voices. Women and children sang their welcome in a song that even now is sung by Muslims in memory of that happy day when, like the full moon, the Prophet ﷺ appeared among his people:

> "The full moon has appeared before us. We must give thanks when called to Allâh. You, who have been sent to us, bring commands that will be obeyed."

As the Prophet ﷺ rode through the streets of Madinah, people would take hold of his camel's halter and invite the Prophet to stay with them. "Let the she-camel go her way," the Prophet ﷺ would say. "She is guided by Allâh." Finally, the she-camel knelt, but the Prophet ﷺ did not dismount. The animal rose to its feet again, ambled ahead for some distance, and then turned back and knelt in the same place it had before. The Prophet's Mosque (Masjid Al-Nabawi) was erected on this very spot.

Many people vied with each other to give shelter to the Prophet ﷺ, but it was Abu Ayyub Ansari ؓ who hurried to lift the saddle from the she-camel and took it to his home. The Prophet ﷺ remarked humorously, "A man must follow his saddle," and went along with Abu Ayyub. Asad bin Zurara took hold of the halter, so he was allowed to take care of the animal.

The *Ansar* chiefs tried to outdo each other in welcoming the Prophet ﷺ. Each night the Prophet ﷺ would receive at least three or four trays of food. Everyone wanted the Prophet ﷺ to know that he had found a new home among his followers.

Ali ؓ migrates

Back in Makkah, Ali ؓ stayed on for three days after the Prophet ﷺ left. During this period, he settled all of the Prophet's affairs in Makkah. He then left on foot and met the Prophet ﷺ in Qubaa, where he stayed in the house of Kulthoom bin Hadam.

The Prophet's family migrates

Six months after the Prophet ﷺ had settled in Madinah, he sent Zayd bin Haritha and Abu Raf'i to Makkah. They came back with the Prophet's family: Fatimah, Umm Kulthoom, Sauda, Umm Ayman, and Osama bin Zayd. Abdullah bin Abu Bakr also accompanied them along with the rest of Abu Bakr's family, Umm Ruman, Aishah and Asmaa.

Suhayb ؓ migrates

The Prophet's departure triggered off a new wave of migration to Madinah. The wealthy Suhayb (also known as Abu Yahya, i.e., the father of Yahya) who had long been planning to migrate, only to be held back by the vigilant Quraysh, finally managed to leave Makkah for Madinah. The Quraysh were obviously trying to stop the flight of capital from their society, and Suhayb struck a bargain with them. He would give them all his possessions and his wealth if they would let him join the Muslims in Madinah. When a now penniless Suhayb reached Madinah and told the Prophet ﷺ how he had won his freedom, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Abu Yahya! This bargain is crowned with success!"

Muslims in Makkah

Not all the Muslims were able to win their freedom and migrate. The Makkans rejoiced in the poorer Muslims' increased vulnerability and tortured them even more to make them renounce

their faith. Waleed bin Waleed, Ayash bin Abi Rabi'a and Hisham bin Aas ﷺ were among this group of unfortunate Muslims. In Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ would pray for them and supplicate against the unbelievers who had held them back. The Muslims remained patient, however, and were finally rescued by their brothers in faith and taken to Madinah.

Difficulties in Madinah

Although the immigrants rejoiced over their freedom from the pagans, life in Madinah presented several difficulties. They had left their homes and belongings and now had to start all over again. Most of them had been traders, while the main occupation in Madinah was date cultivation. Furthermore, the climate did not suit the newcomers, many of whom were soon stricken with fever. The Prophet ﷺ was aware of the great sense of displacement among the *Muhajireen* (the immigrants), and he made the following prayer:

«اللَّهُمَّ حَبِّبْ إِلَيْنَا المَدِينَةَ كَحُبِّنَا مَكَّةَ أَوْ أَشَدَّ وَصَحِّحْهَا، وَبارِكْ فِي صَاعِهَا وَمُدِّهَا، وَانْقُلْ حُمَّاهَا فَاجْعَلْهَا بِالجُحْفَةِ».

"O Allâh! Make Madinah as dear to us as Makkah was, or even dearer! Make its climate salubrious and bless its fruits and grains!"

Allâh granted the Prophet's prayer. The immigrants regained their health and began to love Madinah. As they became engaged in establishing social and emotional ties in Madinah, they found the city becoming more and more of a home to them.

The Prophet's Mosque

Soon after arriving in Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ began the process of setting up the first Muslim state. First, he launched the construction of a mosque. He bought the land where his she-camel had knelt down, about one hundred cubits in length and breadth. There were a few graves located on the land which had to be moved, as well as some date trees that had to be replanted.

The mosque's walls were made of earth and unbaked bricks, its roof was made from branches of date-trees, and tree trunks served as columns. Sand and pebbles were spread on the floor.

The mosque had three doors and the *Qiblah* (a niche in the wall where the leader of the prayer stands) was made to face in the direction of *Bait Al-Maqdis* (Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem).

The Prophet ﷺ worked along with the *Muhajireen* (the Makkan immigrants) and the *Ansar* (the Muslims of Madinah) building the mosque. While they carried bricks, rocks, and tree trunks, they chanted work songs to make their toil easier.

Two apartments were also built near the mosque for the Prophet's two wives, Saudah bint Zam'a and Aishah bint Abu Bakr, whom the Prophet ﷺ married soon after he arrived in Madinah. These apartments were built of stone, mud, and date palms.

The call to prayer

At last the Muslims had a house of worship all their own. They no longer had to congregate surreptitiously as they had in Makkah at Bait Al-Arqam. In Madinah, they began to perform all five prayers in congregation in the Prophet's Mosque. The only problem was that the people were unsure of when each prayer would begin. The Prophet asked his followers for suggestions on how to solve this problem. Some suggested that a shell or conch should be blown. Umar, ever direct, proposed that someone should be appointed to call out loudly, "Prayer is about to begin!" The Prophet ﷺ liked Umar's idea and put it into practice.

Later, however, Abdullah bin Zayd bin Abdu Rabb Al-Ansari had a dream in which he heard a beautiful prayer call. He related his dream to the Prophet ﷺ, who realized that the dream was meant to be fulfilled. He asked Abdullah to teach the words to Bilal bin Rabah, who had a strong and beautiful voice. Bilal learned the words and called out to the Muslims of Madinah:

Allâh is Most Great! Allâh is Most Great!

I testify that there is no deity except Allâh!

I testify that there is no deity except Allâh!

I testify that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allâh!

I testify that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allâh!

Come to the Prayer!

Come to the Prayer!

Come to the Success!

Come to the Success!

Allâh is Most Great!

Allâh is Most Great!

There is no deity except Allâh!

When Umar ﷺ heard the new prayer call, he hurried to the mosque and said, "By Allâh, I have heard this call in my dreams." From that day onward, Muslims gathered at the mosque whenever they heard Bilal make the prayer call.

Brotherhood between the *Muhajireen* and the *Ansar*

The *Ansar* tried to outdo each other in making the *Muhajireen* comfortable in Madinah and put themselves and their possessions at the service of the newcomers. Their generosity is mentioned in the following Verse of the Qur'an:

﴿ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْثِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ﴾ [الحشر: ٩]

> "The *Ansar* love the *Muhajireen* who sought refuge with them, and there is no jealousy in their hearts for what the *Muhajireen* have been given. The *Ansar* give the *Muhajireen* preference over themselves, although they were in need of what the *Muhajireen* received." (59:9)

The Prophet ﷺ helped create a strong bond between the forty-five immigrants and their hosts by assigning each immigrant to a particular family in Madinah. Each immigrant, therefore, was

declared a member of the family he was assigned to. They were to share each other's grief and suffering, and they were even allowed to inherit from each other. Later, however, the permission to inherit from each other was abrogated by a verse in the Qur'an limiting inheritance to blood kin.

The brotherhood that was born between the *Ansar* and *Muhajireen* was no superficial bond based on sufferance of the Prophet's instructions, but a deep sense of kinship that is difficult to imagine today. The *Ansar* felt such a great responsibility for their Makkan proteges that once they even went to the Prophet ﷺ and offered to give half of their precious date groves to the *Muhajireen*. When the Prophet ﷺ would not allow them to do so, they made a second suggestion: "The *Muhajireen* can do some work in the groves and receive a share from the profits as compensation." The Prophet accepted this proposal.

Sa'd bin Rabi'a was a wealthy *Ansari* (singular form of *Ansar*). He was paired with an immigrant, Abdul Rahman bin Auf. Sa'd not only offered Abdul Rahman half his possessions, but also offered him one of his wives. "I have two wives," he said. "Tell me who is more pleasing to you and I shall divorce her so that you may marry her."

Abdul Rahman did not take advantage of his host's generosity. "May Allâh bless your family and your possessions! Just tell me where the market is." Like most Makkans, he was a skilled merchant, and soon he was able to support himself with his earnings from the market. Shortly thereafter, he married a woman from the *Ansar*.

Islamic community

The brotherhood between individual immigrants and their host families created a strong sense of community that was further consolidated when the Prophet ﷺ instituted common rules of conduct for all. However, Madinah was also home to two other communities, the polytheists who had not accepted Islam, and the

Jewish tribes. In order to avoid the kind of conflicts the Muslims had experienced in Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ entered into a covenant with these two communities. The following points were included in the document:

"The *Ansar* and any other tribes who signed a treaty with them were a distinct *Ummah* (nation)."

1. The payment of blood money and the release of prisoners between them and the Muslims would take place according to past practice, and the two non-Muslim communities of Madinah would help the Muslims in matters of ransom and blood money.
2. All three communities of Madinah would unite against any criminals, rebels or hostile armies, even if they should be their own offspring.
3. No Muslim was allowed to kill another Muslim to aid a non-Muslim, nor could he help a non-Muslim against a Muslim.
4. The obligations owed to Allâh were common to all Muslims, and the entire community was responsible for the discharge of this duty if an individual failed to carry out his responsibility.
5. Jews who became Muslim would be treated as any other Muslim.
6. Booty would be shared by all Muslims.
7. One who deliberately killed a Muslim would be killed, unless the victim's family forgave the killer. It was incumbent upon Muslims to rise against the killer.
8. It was unlawful for a Muslim to support anyone who tried to create dissension among Muslims, or anyone who attempted to tamper with the tenets of Islam.
9. Allâh and His Prophet ﷺ would settle all disputes arising among any of the three communities.

The covenant marked a turning point for Muslims. They were bound to each other by a solemn undertaking and through the course of later events, they would prove that the unity, brotherhood and cooperation sown by the covenant had flowered and borne fruit.

As for the position of the Muslims vis-a-vis the non-Muslims, the covenant signified that the Muslims were strong enough to set their own terms. It was made apparent to the polytheists that they would not be able to challenge the Muslims' authority.

Most of the chieftains and notables of Madinah had become Muslim, and there was no one capable of leading those opposed to Islam in open rebellion. Realizing this, the Prophet ﷺ wanted to ensure that non-Muslims who were discontent with the new power structure did not look to Makkah for help. He made the non-Muslims agree to the following stipulation: "We will not shelter the Quraysh, nor will we refuse to offer protection to Muslims."

The Prophet ﷺ drew up a separate covenant between the Muslims and the Jews:

1. The Jews and Muslims would live together as two separate nations, each with its own way of life, and each in charge of its own financial affairs.
2. Both nations would jointly defend the city from attack, and each would defend its own people.
3. Both nations would coexist peacefully, and neither was to meddle in the affairs of the other or in any way attempt to destabilize the other.
4. Neither nation was responsible for the misdeeds of the other.
5. The oppressed would be helped and supported.
6. Both nations would bear the expenses of war.
7. Subversion and unwarranted bloodshed were unlawful for both nations.

8. All disputes would be referred to Allâh and His Prophet ﷺ.
9. The Quraysh and their allies were not to be aided or given refuge.
10. The covenant would not provide any safeguard to wrong-doers or criminals.

This covenant united the three communities of Madinah and defined the Prophet ﷺ as the undisputed head of state. Once everyone understood his rights and responsibilities, the Prophet ﷺ began to actively call the other two communities to Islam. Many embraced Islam, and those who preferred their own religion lived in peace with the ruling Muslims. There were others, however, who were interested neither in Islam nor peaceful coexistence. A faction from them became Muslim so as to weaken Islam from within. They were later known as the Hypocrites. Their leader was Abdullah bin Ubayy, and together with the group of hostile non-Muslims, they represented the greatest threat to the security of Madinah.

The Quraysh test the Muslim's resolve

In spite of all the precautions the Prophet ﷺ took to ensure that Madinah remained safe and peaceful, the Quraysh were determined to destabilize the city. The Quraysh sent word to the polytheists of Madinah, ordering them to help drive out the Muslims. If the polytheists refused to help, the Quraysh threatened to kill their children and capture their women. The Prophet ﷺ found out about the threats and convinced the polytheists not to give in to the strong-arm tactics employed by the Quraysh.

The Quraysh seethed at the turn of events. Their frustration was apparent when Sa'd bin Mu'adh ؓ went to Makkah to perform *Umrah,* the minor pilgrimage. As he circumambulated the *Ka'bah* with Abu Safwan Umayya bin Khalaf, he met Abu Jahl. Abu Jahl recognized him as one of the residents of Madinah who had become Muslim and accosted Sa'd. "So you find safety in Makkah while

you have provided refuge to the faithless. By God, if you were not with Abu Safwan, you would not return home safe and sound."

Abu Jahl's threat indicated that the Quraysh were intent on keeping Muslims from visiting the *Ka'bah* and performing their religious duties there. It also indicated that they were prepared to kill unarmed Muslims.

The Jews of Madinah also represented another threat to the Muslims. They played on the old rivalry between the two tribes of Madinah, the Aus and Khazraj, hoping to rekindle the bitter feud that had once rent them. The fledgling Muslim community faced threats from both within and without. The danger of bloodshed grew so serious that the Muslims began keeping their weapons next to their beds at night. The Prophet ﷺ was also protected by armed bodyguards until Allâh revealed the verse:

﴿وَٱللَّهُ يَعۡصِمُكَ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِۗ﴾ [المائدة: ٦٧]

"Allâh will guard you from mankind." (5:67)

Permission to fight

Up to this point, the Prophet ﷺ had counseled Muslims to endure insults and abuses in silence. Now, however, the Muslims had the upper hand. This new found supremacy triggered off even fiercer opposition from their enemies. At last, Allâh made it permissible for Muslims to fight against their oppressors, and this permission later became a duty. The permission to fight was given in stages.

At first the Muslims were allowed to fight only the Quraysh because they were the first to oppress Muslims in Makkah. Muslims were also allowed to seize their goods, but not those of tribes at peace with them.

Then the Muslims were allowed to fight any pagan tribe that allied itself with the Quraysh, or any other pagan tribe that oppressed Muslims.

Later, the Muslims were permitted to fight any Jewish tribe that

broke its covenant with the Muslims. In such a case, the covenant was automatically nullified.

Subsequently, the Muslims were allowed to fight "People of the Book" (Christians and Jews) who harassed or persecuted them. If the "People of the Book" surrendered to the Islamic state and paid *Jiziyah* (a nominal tax), then the Muslims were forbidden to fight them.

Finally, the Muslims were required to make peace with any polytheists, Jews or Christians who embraced Islam, and to respect their rights and property.

Military expeditions (*Saraya* and *Ghazawat*)

Now that Allâh had enjoined Muslims to fight in self defense, the Prophet ﷺ molded the formerly oppressed, meek community into a military organization that would fight to survive and would no longer tolerate the depredations of every tribe that decided to prey on them. Archery and horsemanship were held out as activities to excel in. The Prophet ﷺ organized the Muslims into cavalry units called *Saraya*. Sometimes he would accompany these squadrons, and the expeditions he took part in were called *Ghazawat*.

The cavalry units undertook four main tasks. Primarily they were to protect the outskirts of Madinah and to gather intelligence about any suspicious activities.

Secondly, they worked to intercept Makkan trade caravans passing through the area. Many Muslims had been forced to leave their wealth behind in Makkah when they migrated to Madinah; therefore, Muslims were allowed to retaliate by raiding caravans financed by the Quraysh.

Thirdly, it was the responsibility of these cavalry units to make covenants with other tribes outside Madinah. The Prophet ﷺ saw the need to develop good relationships with these tribes so that they would not ally themselves with the Quraysh.

Lastly, the units were entrusted with the task of spreading the message of Islam throughout Arabia.

The first *Sariyya* (singular form of *Saraya*) that the Prophet ﷺ dispatched was called Sariyya Saif Al-Bahr. It took place in Ramadan, 1 A.H. (the first year of the Prophet's migration or Hijrah: A.H. refers to After Hijrah). The Prophet's uncle Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib ؓ led the squadron accompanied by thirty *Muhajireen*. They headed for the coast of the Red Sea on the outskirts of Ais and came across a caravan headed by Abu Jahl that was returning from Syria. A battle almost erupted when the two parties faced each other, but Majdi bin Amr Jahni intervened and matters subsided.

This was the first *Sariyya* in the history of Islam. The Muslims rode beneath a white standard (the first ever used by Muslims) borne by Abu Marthad bin Haseen Ghanwi ؓ.

In the following months, the Prophet ﷺ sent a number of *Saraya* one after another. Abu Ubaydah bin Harith ؓ led a party of sixty *Muhajireen* to Batn Rabi. They came across Abu Sufyan and two hundred Makkans. Arrows were shot from both sides but there was no combat. Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ؓ was dispatched along with twenty *Muhajirieen* to Rabigh near Kharar, but the men returned without having had to fight.

Then in Safar, 2 A.H., for the first time the Prophet ﷺ himself went out to battle accompanied by seventy *Muhajireen*. They journeyed to Abwa or Wadan, but once again they did not come across any enemies. However, it was during this journey that the Prophet ﷺ finalized a treaty of peace and cooperation with Amr bin Makhshi al Dhamri.

The following month (Rabi' Al-Awwal, 2 A.H.), the Prophet ﷺ led a group of men to Buwat on the outskirts of Radwi. During the same month, Kurz bin Jabir Al-Fihri rustled some grazing cattle belonging to the Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ gathered seventy *Muhajireen* and chased him to Safwan on the outskirts of Badr, but Kurz escaped.

This expedition is known as the First Battle of Badr.

The Prophet ﷺ also led a squadron of 150 to 200 *Muhajireen* in either Jamad Al-Awwal or Jamad Al-Thani, 2 A.H. They went to Dhul Ashira to intercept a caravan headed for Syria, but it had passed a few days before they arrived. During this journey the Prophet ﷺ finalized a non-aggression pact with Banu Madlaj.

To further steel his men in the art of warfare, the Prophet ﷺ sent Abdullah bin Jahsh Asadi along with twelve *Muhajireen* to Nakhlah (an area between Makkah and Tâ'if) in Rajab, 2 A.H. Their objective was to gather intelligence about a caravan financed by the Quraysh. Abdullah's men attacked the caravan and killed one person. They also took two captives whom they brought back to Madinah. When the Prophet ﷺ heard about what had happened, he became very upset. He set the prisoners free and paid blood money to the victim's family. The Quraysh protested vehemently about the attack because it took place in Rajab, one of the "prohibited months," the period during which fighting is unlawful.

Allâh revealed the following verse in reference to the Muslim attack on the caravan:

﴿ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلشَّهْرِ ٱلْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ ۖ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۖ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌۢ بِهِۦ وَٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِۦ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِ ﴾ [البقرة: ٢١٧]

> "They ask you concerning fighting in the prohibited months. Say: Fighting during these months is a grave offense, but preventing people from following the path of Allâh, disbelieving in Him, preventing access to the Sacred Mosque, and driving out its residents are greater offenses with Allâh. Unrest and oppression are worse than killing." (2:217)

A new *Qiblah*

In Sha'ban, 2 H, the *Qiblah* (direction Muslims pray toward) was changed from *Bait Al-Maqdis* in Jerusalem to the *Ka'bah* in

Makkah. The change was announced by Allâh in a verse in the Qur'an. The Prophet ﷺ and the sincere Muslims rejoiced over this change. The Hypocrites who had pretended to be Muslims, however, protested the change, and many of them reverted to either Judaism or paganism, thereby purifying the ranks of Muslims.

The Battle of Badr

The military raids undertaken by the Muslims were minor until this point. They had been more exploratory than anything else, but they had served to initiate Muslims into the conduct of warfare. It was the Battle of Badr, however, that was a milestone for Islam as the first decisive battle between the Muslims and the Quraysh.

The Prophet ﷺ rode to Dhul Ashirah attempting to intercept a trade caravan from Makkah to Syria. The caravan, however, managed to flee to Syria. The Prophet then dispatched two men to Hawraa in Syria to await the caravan's return. When the scouts spotted the caravan approaching, they hurried back to Madinah to inform the Prophet ﷺ. Once the Prophet ﷺ heard that the caravan was returning, he mustered between 313 and 317 men, two horses and seventy camels. He then headed for Badr, about 155 km southwest of Madinah.

The Prophet ﷺ awarded the white standard to Mus'ab bin Umayr رضي الله عنه. The *Muhajireen* were given a separate standard which was carried by Ali bin Talib, while the standard of the *Ansar* was borne by Sa'd bin Mu'adh رضي الله عنه.

Badr, ringed by high mountains, was accessible through three routes. One, called Al-Udwat Al-Qaswa, lay in the south; the second, called Al-Udwat Al-Duniya, approached from the north, and the third approached from the east and was used by the people of Madinah as the main thoroughfare to the settlement of Badr. There were some houses, wells and orchards in Badr, and for this reason Makkan caravans heading for Syria traveled along it and generally broke their journey there, staying anywhere from a few hours to a few days.

It would have been simple for the Prophet ﷺ and his men to seize the caravan by blockading all three escape routes. Success depended on the element of surprise, however, and the Muslims would have to appear only after the caravan pulled into Badr and seal off all three routes before the Quraysh could react. Accordingly, the Prophet ﷺ and his men left Madinah heading in the opposite direction from Badr. Once the Prophet ﷺ was at a safe distance away from Madinah, he changed routes and headed directly for Badr.

The caravan that the Muslims hoped to seize was headed by Abu Sufyan bin Harb. It consisted of forty men, one thousand camels and goods worth about fifty thousand dinars. Abu Sufyan was highly cautious, and he asked every person he met about the movements of the Muslims. He was at a great distance from Badr when he found out that a large band of Muslims had left Madinah. Acting quickly, he turned the caravan westward and headed for the coast, bypassing Badr altogether. Moreover, he sent a messenger to Makkah requesting reinforcements.

When the Quraysh received Abu Sufyan's message, they quickly rounded up a squadron of 1,300 men to confront the Muslims and protect the caravan. All the notable chiefs of Makkah, except for Abu Lahab, joined the force, as well as every available man from each of the neighboring tribes. Of the Makkan clans, only Banu Adiy refused to take part.

When the pagan army reached Juhfa, they received a message from Abu Sufyan informing them that the caravan was safe and that the army should return to Makkah. The men were preparing to return when Abu Jahl arrogantly refused to retreat. Only the men from the Banu Zahra returned on the advice of their chief, Akhnas bin Shariq Thaqafi. The rest of the troops, now numbering one thousand, continued their journey. Upon reaching Udwa Qasmi, the Quraysh set up their camp in a spacious field, just behind the mountains that surrounded Badr.

The Prophet ﷺ learned that the Quraysh were approaching Badr, and he met with his men to discuss their options. Abu Bakr and Umar رضي الله عنهما both gave their opinions, and Miqdad bin Amr ﷺ voiced the prevailing sentiment:

"O Prophet, we will not say what the Children of Israel said to Musa:

﴿فَٱذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَٰتِلَآ إِنَّا هَٰهُنَا قَٰعِدُونَ﴾ [المائدة: ٢٤]

'You and your Lord go and fight, and we will sit here.'(5:24)

"We will fight along with you on your left and on your right, in front of you and behind you."

Miqdad's words gladdened the Prophet ﷺ with their sincerity, for he had worried the *Ansar* would fight in defense only if they were attacked in Madinah. After all, the Second Pledge of Aqabah did not call for the Ansar to fight alongside the Prophet ﷺ outside the city.

The Prophet ﷺ then asked the men if they all agreed. Sa'd bin Mu'adh ﷺ, the chieftain of the *Ansar,* said:

"O Prophet, I swear by the One Who has sent you with the Truth, that if you plunge into the sea, we will also plunge in with you, and not a single man among us will lag behind. We will not hesitate if you dash against the enemies, for we are firm in war and bold in the fray. Lead us, and may Allâh bless us and our mission!"

At this, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«سِيرُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى قَدْ وَعَدَنِي إِحْدَى الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ. وَاللهِ لَكَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ الآنَ إِلى مَصَارِعِ القَوْمِ».

"I bring you glad tidings from Allâh. He has promised me either booty from the caravan or victory on the battlefield. By Allâh, there is a vision before me of a battlefield, and I see the exact places where each man will fall."

Resolutely the Prophet ﷺ led his men onward to Badr, and they

arrived there the same night as the Quraysh. The Muslims set up camp at Al-Udwat Al-Duniya, but Al-Hubab ibn Al-Mundhir advised the Prophet ﷺ that they should move ahead and encamp at the well nearest the enemy so that they could store water in reservoirs. He also suggested that the rest of the wells be filled up so that the Quraysh would have no water. The Prophet took Hubab's brilliant advice and carried out his instructions. The Muslims then made a small enclosure of palm branches in which the Prophet ﷺ would stay while directing his men during the battle. A group of *Ansar* youths were put under the command of Sa'd bin Mu'adh to act as lookouts.

After this, the Prophet ﷺ walked around Badr with his men, saying "This is the spot where so and so will fall in battle tomorrow, God-willing." He passed the night in prayer at the foot of a tree while a gentle rain fell and lulled the men into a refreshing sleep. Allâh recounts His favor to the believers in the following verse:

﴿ إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ ٱلنُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِۦ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمْ رِجْزَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ ٱلْأَقْدَامَ ﴾ [الأنفال: ١١]

"Remember how Allâh enveloped you with drowsiness to make you feel safe. He caused rain to descend upon you from heaven so you could clean yourselves—rain that also removed Satan's influence, strengthened your hearts, and made you stand firm in battle." (8:11)

The next morning (Friday, Ramadan 17, 2 A.H.) the two armies came face to face. "O Allâh! Here come the Quraysh in their vanity and arrogance," the Prophet ﷺ supplicated. "They deny You and call Your Prophet a liar. O Allâh! Fulfill Your promise to me! Help us, Allâh!"

The Prophet ﷺ assembled his men and told them not to begin fighting until he ordered them to do so. "Use arrows only when they come close, and don't draw your swords unless they are very near." Abu Bakr ؓ then escorted the Prophet to the small enclosure where the Prophet began to pray to his Lord:

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ تَهلِكْ هَذِهِ العِصَابَةُ اليَومَ لا تُعْبَدُ أَبَدًا. اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ شِئْتَ لَمْ تُعْبَدْ بَعْدَ اليَومِ أَبَدًا».

"O Allâh! If this group is destroyed today, You will not be worshipped for ever. O Allâh! If it is Your consent that after this day You will not be worshipped for ever."

Abu Jahl also prayed: "O God, destroy today the party that seeks to break filial ties and believes in wrong-doing. O Allâh! Help the party today which is much loved by you."

Challenge to single combat

The Quraysh's three best horsemen, Utbah bin Rabi'a, Shayba bin Rabi'a, and Waleed bin Utbah, stepped forward and challenged the Muslims to single combat. In response, three members of the *Ansar* came forward, but the challengers were thirsty for the blood of the Makkan exiles and said, "We want our cousins." The *Ansar* withdrew, and Ubaydah bin Harith, Hamzah and Ali came forward. Hamzah faced Shayba, Ali stood before Waleed, and Ubaydah accepted Utbah's challenge. Hamzah and Ali both killed their opponents with ease, but Ubaydah and Utbah had wounded one another, and neither had the upper hand. Ali and Hamzah ran to Ubaydah's aid and killed his opponent, and then brought Ubaydah, who had lost his leg, back to their ranks. Later he died of this injury at Safra'a on the way back to Madinah.

The Battle of Badr begins

The Quraysh smarted at having lost three men before the battle had even begun. They charged at the Muslims, who, encouraged by their early success, faced the onslaught without flinching. Proclaiming Allâh's Oneness, the Muslims cried out: "*Ahad*! *Ahad*!" [One! One!]

The Prophet ﷺ, who was given an insight into the supernatural allies sent to him, turned to Abu Bakr and said, "Rejoice, O Abu Bakr, Allâh's help has come. This is Jibreel, moving ahead with his horse's bridle in his hand. His garments are besmeared with dirt and dust." Allâh's help came in the form of one thousand angels.

The Prophet ﷺ then marched forward toward the fray, and at that moment the following verse was revealed:

﴿ سَيُهْزَمُ ٱلْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ ٱلدُّبُرَ ﴾ [القمر: ٤٥]

> "Soon will their multitude be put to flight, and they will show their backs." (54:45)

The Prophet ﷺ took a handful of dust and threw it at the Quraysh saying, "Let their faces be disfigured." The dust flew into the eyes and noses of the Quraysh, as mentioned in the following verse:

﴿ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَمَىٰ ﴾ [الأنفال: ١٧]

> "It was not you who threw, but Allâh." (8:17)

The Prophet ﷺ ordered his men to attack, crying out, "Rise!" The Muslims, outnumbered three to one, were inspired when they saw that the Prophet ﷺ himself was present among them and ready to fight. Supported by the invisible army of angels, the Muslims swarmed over the Quraysh. The Quraysh fell one after another, and soon they retreated in disarray. The Muslims followed in pursuit, slaying some and capturing others.

Satan, who was also present in the guise of Suraqa bin Malik bin Ju'shum, saw the army of angels, and escaped by plunging into the Red Sea.

Abu Jahl killed

As befitting a general, Abu Jahl was well-protected during the battle by men carrying swords and spears. He was so well guarded no Muslim could even get near him.

A young boy told Abdul Rahman bin Auf, "Show me Abu Jahl."

Abdul Rahman replied, "What have you to do with him?"

"I have been told that he vilifies the Prophet ﷺ. By the One in Whose hand my life lies, I shall kill him when I see him, or shall be killed by him!"

Another young boy told Abdul Rahman the same thing. Suddenly, Abdul Rahman spotted Abu Jahl on the battlefield and pointed him out to the two young boys. They attacked him fiercely with their swords, and Abu Jahl fell to the earth. After the battle, they both presented themselves before the Prophet ﷺ, each claiming to have killed Abu Jahl. He looked at their swords and proclaimed, "Both of you have killed him."

The young boys were Mu'adh ibn Afra and Mu'adh ibn Amr. The first is said to have been martyred in the same battle, but Mu'adh ibn Amr remained alive till the Caliphate of Uthman رضي الله عنه. The Prophet ﷺ gave him Abu Jahl's belongings.

Abdullah bin Mas'ood, who found Abu Jahl dying on the battlefield, placed his leg on his old enemy's neck and caught hold of his beard to behead him. "Hasn't Allâh disgraced you, O enemy of Allâh?"

Even as he lay dying Abu Jahl was unrepentant. "For what have I been disgraced? Is there anybody above the man you have killed? I only wish someone other than a farmer had killed me. Tell me, who was victorious today?"

"Allâh and His Messenger," Abdullah said.

"O herdsman! You have mounted a very difficult place," Abu Jahl responded. Abdullah رضي الله عنه then cut his head off and placed it before the Prophet ﷺ.

"Allâh is the Greatest! All praise is due to Allâh," the Prophet cried. "He has proven His promise to be true, helped His servants, and defeated the opposing army." Gazing at Abu Jahl's head before him, the Prophet ﷺ said, "He was the Pharaoh of his nation."

Day of Distinction

With Abu Jahl's death the Quraysh were humbled. They scattered, defeated by an army of men and angels, and thus ended the Battle of Badr. It was fought not for territory, riches, or honor, but to make belief in Allâh victorious over unbelief. The Muslims fought against their fathers, uncles, sons, brothers, cousins and friends.

Umar ﷺ killed his maternal uncle, Asi bin Hisham, while Abu Bakr faced his son, Abdul Rahman, and the Prophet's ﷺ uncle Abbas was captured. Utbah bin Rabi'a, who was one of the first three to challenge the Muslims in a preliminary duel, fought against his son, Abu Hudhayfah, one of the Prophet's closest Companions. Blood ties were severed so that belief would prevail over unbelief. The day came to be called "*Yaum Al-Furqan*" (the day of distinction), because on this day the battle lines were drawn not according to tribe, but according to belief in Allâh.

Fourteen Muslims were honored with martyrdom during the Battle of Badr (six *Muhajireen* and eight *Ansar*). They were buried at Badr, and their grave sites are still known today.

On the pagan side, seventy men were slain and an equal number taken captive. Most of the dead were tribal notables and chieftains. In fact, the bodies of twenty-four pagan chieftains were thrown into a foul-smelling well.

The Prophet ﷺ and his men stayed in Badr for three days. When he was about to begin the journey back to Madinah, he stood over the well and called out to each chieftain by name: "O son of so and so! Do you wish you had obeyed Allâh and His Messenger? I have found that what my Lord promised me is true. Did you find your lord's promise true?"

"O Prophet ﷺ," Umar ﷺ asked. "How can you talk to bodies which have no souls?"

"They hear me just as you do, but they cannot answer," the Prophet ﷺ explained.

News of Badr reaches Makkah and Madinah

The pagans who had escaped carried the news of their defeat back to Makkah. The Makkans were crushed and disgraced. Unwilling to give the Muslims still in Makkah a chance to see them grieve, they prohibited mourning over their dead and captured.

Refraining from mourning, however, would not be easy. For

example, Aswad bin Muttalib lost three sons at Badr, and he desperately wanted to lament for his dead sons. One night he heard a woman weeping uncontrollably and he assumed that mourning had been permitted. He immediately sent a slave to find out if it was so. He found out that mourning was still banned—the woman was crying for her lost camel. When he learned this, he raged:

> "She cries because her camel is lost and restlessness has disrupted her sleep? Cry not over the camel, but over Badr where fortune fell on an evil day!"

The Prophet ﷺ sent two messengers to announce the victory to the people of Madinah. Abdullah bin Rawaha went to northern Madinah, while Zayd bin Haritha went to southern Madinah. The people of Madinah had been worried, especially because the Jews had spread rumors that the mighty Quraysh had overpowered the Muslims. When the Prophet's messengers arrived, the people shouted "*Allâhu Akbar*! Allâh is Most Great!" The Muslims were jubilant. Allâh had given them victory, and they were serene in their belief that Allâh would reward those Muslims who fell in battle .

Return to Madinah

While the Muslims were heading back to Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ received a revelation from Allâh concerning the distribution of the spoils of war. One-fifth of the booty was set aside for the Prophet ﷺ, and the rest was to be distributed among those who fought in the battle. He became the first prophet who was allowed to share in the spoils of war. Allâh also ordained that Nadir bin Harith be executed, and Ali ؓ beheaded him. Later, the command to kill Utbah bin Abu Mu'ayt was given, and Asim bin Thabit Ansari beheaded him (but some sources indicate that it was Ali bin Abi Talib who slew him).

Upon hearing the news of the great victory, many of the citizens from Madinah traveled toward Badr in hopes of being the first to congratulate the Prophet ﷺ. They met the victorious Muslims in Ruha, and accompanied them back to Madinah. The sight of the

triumphant Muslims entering Madinah with dozens of captives led many people to become Muslim.

The captives

After reaching Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ held consultations regarding the prisoners of war. Abu Bakr ؓ said that they should let the Quraysh buy their freedom, while Umar ؓ was in favor of executing all of them. The Prophet ﷺ decided to set them free in return for a ransom, which ranged from one thousand to four thousand dinars. Those who could not pay and were literate were required to teach ten Muslim children each by way of ransom. Those unable to do either were set free anyway.

A poignant sidelight of this battle was the capture and subsequent ransom of Abul Aas, the Prophet's son-in-law. Zaynab رضي الله عنها, the Prophet's daughter, who was the wife of Abul Aas, was still in Makkah, and she sent a necklace to ransom her husband. The Prophet recognized the necklace. He himself had given it to his daughter as a wedding gift. His eyes filled with tears, and he sought the consent of his Companions to free Abul Aas without ransom. The Companions agreed, and Abul Aas was freed on the condition that he would let Zaynab migrate to Madinah. After he returned to Makkah, Zaynab was allowed to join her father in Madinah.

Ruqayyah dies and Uthman marries Umm Kulthoom

When the Prophet ﷺ left for the Battle of Badr, his daughter, Ruqayyah رضي الله عنها, was ill. The Prophet ﷺ asked Uthman ؓ, her husband, to stay in Madinah to attend to his sick wife. He would get the same reward, the Prophet ﷺ promised him, and an equal share of the booty as those who fought at Badr. Usama bin Zayd was asked to stay in Madinah for the same reason. Unfortunately, Ruqayyah died before the Prophet returned. Usama bin Zayd said, "The news of the victory came to us after we had already buried Ruqayyah."

Later, the Prophet ﷺ gave his daughter, Umm Kulthoom رضى الله عنها, in marriage to the bereaved Uthman ؓ. Because he was married to two of the Prophet's daughters in succession, Uthman ؓ came to

be called "*Dhul Noorayn*" (one who has two lights). Umm Kulthoom رضی الله عنها died while married to Uthman ﷺ in the month of Sha'ban, 9 A.H. , and was buried next to the Prophet's Mosque in the cemetery known as Baqi.

Events after Badr

The victory Allâh granted the Muslims at Badr deeply grieved the pagans. Revenge was uppermost on their minds, and to this end they devised plans to inflict heavy losses on the Muslims. As events show us, Allâh, however, turned the tables on the Quraysh and blessed the Muslims with further triumphs and even more prestige.

Just one week after the return from Badr, or after two and a half or three months according to some sources, Banu Sulaym began conscripting an army to invade Madinah. In a preemptive strike, the Muslims raided their base and came back with booty. Then Umayr bin Wahab Jumahi and Safwan bin Umayya decided to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ.

Umayr stole into Madinah, hoping to carry out his mission, but was apprehended as soon as he entered Madinah. Allâh had revealed Umayr's motives to the Prophet ﷺ, who in turn disclosed Umayr's secret plan to him. Umayr repented and embraced Islam.

Expedition against Banu Qaynuqa

Even though the victory at Badr was decisive, it did not spell a reprieve for the Muslims. In fact, each tribe among the pagans and the Jews took it upon itself to keep up the pressure by harassing the Muslim state. The Jews of Banu Qaynuqa engaged in openly hostile acts, and when the Prophet ﷺ called on them to refrain, they retorted derisively, "Do not delude yourself, Muhammad, just because some naïve fools and simpletons have entered your fold. Should you ever fight against us, you will test our mettle as men of valor." The Prophet ﷺ responded with his customary patience, which brought forth even more provocation from Banu Qaynuqa.

Banu Qaynuqa started a clash in the market place which resulted in the death of a Muslim and a Jew. This time the Prophet ﷺ dealt with them firmly. He ordered the Muslims to besiege the enemy. It was Saturday, the middle of Shawwal, 2 A.H. After holding out a fortnight, Banu Qaynuqa laid down their arms on the night of the new moon of Dhul Qa'dah. The Prophet ﷺ expelled them, driving them away towards Adhrat in Syria, where most of them died shortly afterwards.

Expedition of Saweeq

Meanwhile, Abu Sufyan was still smarting over the defeat at Badr. He thirsted for another military encounter, one which he felt sure would go their way, and swore he would not bathe until he had fought with Muhammad ﷺ again. With an army of two hundred men, he came to Madinah, seeking to acquit himself of his oath. Intent on spreading destruction, they raided a settlement named Arid, hacked and burned a number of precious date trees, and got away after killing two of the *Ansar*.

When the Prophet ﷺ received news of the raiders, he and his followers went out in pursuit. Abu Sufyan and his men succeeded in eluding the Prophet ﷺ, who pursued them until Karkarat Al-Kadr. In trying to get away swiftly, the Quraysh were forced to get rid of most of their valuable provisions, especially the corn meal, or saweeq, from which the expedition got its name.

Ka'b bin Ashraf is killed

The next thorn in the Muslims' side was Ka'b bin Ashraf, an extremely wealthy Jewish poet whose enmity for the Muslims and their Prophet ﷺ was unrelenting. Ka'b would use his considerable poetic talent to compose and recite derogatory verses against the Prophet ﷺ, his Companions, and the honor of Muslim women, while he eulogized their sworn enemies and incited them to fight the Muslims. Immediately after the Battle of Badr, he traveled to Makkah to stir up passions. To an already bloodthirsty and enraged Quraysh, he orated at length, bidding them to extract

vengeance for their defeat.

Ka'b was a skilled demagogue, and given the high esteem poetry and poets had in Arab society, his words worked a spell on the Quraysh. His call for revenge was welcome as was his assurance that the Quraysh were on a higher spiritual plane than the Muslims. He exhorted them to learn a lesson from what had happened with Banu Qaynuqa.

The Quraysh were a willing audience, and they swore to act on Ka'b's advice. Having wound up his propaganda campaign against the Muslims, Ka'b returned to Madinah to continue his subversive acts against the Muslim state. When the Prophet ﷺ heard about Ka'b's return to Madinah, he said to his Companions, "Ka'b bin Ashraf has offended Allâh and His Messenger. Who will rid me of him?"

In response to the Prophet's call, Muhammad bin Muslimah, Ubbad bin Bishr, Abu Naailah, Harith bin Aws and Abu Abs bin Jabr volunteered their services. Muhammad bin Muslimah was appointed the head of the mission, and accordingly thought up a plan, but since it involved subterfuge, he sought the Prophet's consent before putting his plan into action.

Having received the Prophet's permission to entrap Ka'b, Muhammad bin Muslimah went to Ka'b. After Ka'b's initial wariness had worn off, Muhammad confided, "This man [indicating the Prophet ﷺ] came to us asking for charity, but he has put us to great trouble."

Muhammad bin Muslimah's words had the desired effect. Ka'b exclaimed with joy, "By God, you people will tire of him even more in the future!"

Now that Muhammad had gained Ka'b's confidence, he requested a loan of wheat or dates, leaving his weapon as collateral. His request was granted.

Next came Abu Naailah with a similar complaint. He confided that

some of his companions held the same unfavorable opinion of the Prophet ﷺ and that he would bring them to Ka‘b, as they were also in need of Ka‘b’s help. Ka‘b graciously agreed to meet them at a later date, delighted at finding more and more disenchanted Muslims through whom he could hurt the Prophet.

It was the fourteenth of Rabi‘ Al-Awwal, 3 A.H., and the full moon was shining down on Ka‘b as he lay with his new wife in his fortress. When the five armed Muslims called out to him, Ka‘b readily went down to see them, disregarding his wife’s pleas to take care. He was so complacent about his success in finding collaborators that even the sight of the Muslims’ weapons did not startle him. He certainly did not see himself as their target.

They set out on a stroll. Abu Naailah complimented Ka‘b about his perfume, and asked permission to smell his head. Flattered, Ka‘b obliged. Abu Naailah sniffed Ka‘b’s head and then, holding Ka‘b’s head in his hands, bade his companions smell the fragrance as well. He asked to do so again and was allowed to smell the fragrance once more. When Ka‘b’s head was securely in his grasp, Abu Naailah urged his comrades, “ Seize this enemy of Allâh!”

Instantly, the others struck with their swords, but with no success. Finally, Muhammad bin Muslimah used his axe to strike Ka‘b’s abdomen. As the axe cleaved his body, Ka‘b died screaming horribly. The sound of the disturbance roused Ka‘b’s men, who lit torches around the top of the fort, but they did not find the five men who got away, having silenced their most vocal enemy at last.

Ka‘b’s death greatly demoralized the Jews. In their new found sense of discretion they decided against open warfare upon the Muslims and went underground, and the Muslims were safe for a while from harassment.

The *Sariyya* of Qardah

In Jamad Al-Awwal, 3 A.H., the Quraysh sent a trade caravan to Syria by way of Iraq. They entrusted the caravan to Safwan bin

Umayya and were not overly concerned at the risks involved since the route went through Najd, far from Madinah and the menace of the Muslims.

When the Prophet ﷺ came to know about the Qurayshi caravan with its precious cargo, he dispatched a cavalry of two hundred men under the command of Zayd bin Haritha ؓ. At Najd, as the caravan halted at a spring named Qardah, Zayd and his men swooped down on the caravan and its travelers. Even though the men managed to flee, their possessions fell into the hands of the Muslims as did the caravan guide, Furat bin Hayyan. The humane treatment Furat experienced at the hands of his captors so impressed him that he became Muslim.

When the booty from the caravan was evaluated, its worth stood at a hundred thousand dirhams. With this raid, the Muslims had inflicted on the Quraysh an economic defeat as devastating as the military one at Badr.

The Battle of Uhud

Now the Quraysh had two humiliating episodes to live down. Badr and Qardah were bitter losses, and it was time to channel all their anger and hatred into a military strike against the Muslims. Preparations began at a furious pace as the Quraysh launched a recruitment drive and admitted voluntary soldiers and anyone with a personal grudge against the Muslims, especially those who had lost fathers, sons or brothers at Badr.

Bards were brought in to incite the people with their songs of vengeance. Subsidiary tribes who owed allegiance to the Quraysh were also made to join the army. Women went with them to boost their morale and prevent them from taking flight. The Quraysh ultimately mustered an army of 3000 soldiers with 300 camels, 200 horses and 700 coats of mail. Abu Sufyan was the

commander-in-chief of the Makkan army, and the valiant fighters of Banu Abdul Dar were appointed its standard bearers.

The proud and fearsome Makkan army advanced towards Madinah. On Friday, the 6th of Shawwal, 3 A.H., they reached the outskirts of the city and camped in an open field in the valley of Qanah below Mounts Ainain and Uhud.

The Prophet ﷺ had been expecting the enemy for a week. He had already set up a patrol system around Madinah to ensure the city's safety and had declared a state of emergency.

When the Makkan army arrived, the Prophet ﷺ sought the counsel of his Companions regarding further defensive measures. His plan was to remain in the city, with the men facing the enemy at the entrance of lanes and alleys, and the women attacking from the rooftops of their houses.

When the plan was outlined before the community, the Hypocrites among them, those who had become Muslim as a matter of convenience, were happy not to be out on the battlefield. Their leader, Abdullah bin Ubayy, supported the plan, since he could then sit safely at home without being accused of falling back from the battle. Some of the young men, however, were eager to meet the enemy in open combat, and pressed for a direct military encounter. The Prophet ﷺ agreed to their demands, and accordingly, he divided his army into three squads—one squad consisted of the *Muhajireen* (migrants) with Mus'ab bin Umayr as the standard bearer, another comprised the Aus tribe with Usayd bin Hudair as the standard bearer, and the third unit consisted of the Khazraj with Hubab bin Mundhir as the standard bearer.

After *'Asr* prayer, the Prophet ﷺ set out towards Mount Uhud and inspected his troops at Shaykhayn. He decided to send back the youths among them in his desire to keep them safe. However, he later allowed Rafi bin Khadij to stay on, for he was a good archer whose skills would prove useful. Up came Samura bin Jundab

pleading to be retained also. After all, wasn't he stronger than Rafi? And hadn't he thrown Rafi in several wrestling bouts? Samura begged for a trial bout and made good his claim, so the Prophet ﷺ allowed him to go into battle as well.

At Shaykhayn the Prophet ﷺ offered his *Maghrib* (sunset) and *'Isha* (evening) prayers. He spent the night there, and appointed fifty watchmen to guard the troops. In the stillness of night, he then departed, going on to Shaut, where he prayed *Fajr* at dawn. Just as things seemed to be going reasonably smoothly, the Hypocrites struck the first blow. Abdullah bin Ubayy chose to rebel against the Prophet ﷺ at this point and withdrew with his 300 companions. His action sent Banu Salma and Banu Harith reeling. Surprised and dismayed, they reacted to the news so badly that they themselves considered retreating.

Ultimately the Prophet's counsel and Allâh's grace renewed their resolve, but the Muslim army of 1000 had shrunk by almost a third to 700.

Heading this truncated army, the Prophet ﷺ marched towards Uhud through a short route leaving the enemy forces in the western part of the area. He descended into the valley of Mount Uhud, all the while keeping his back to the mountain. Thus, the enemies stood between the Muslims and Madinah.

Then the Prophet ﷺ drew up his troops for battle. On Mount Ainain, which later came to be known as Mount Ramaah, he formed a unit of fifty archers under Abdullah bin Jubayr Al-Ansari ﷛ and instructed them to hold back the enemy and guard the backs of the Muslim troops. He stressed that under no circumstances were they to withdraw. They were to await his instructions, regardless of which way the battle went.

The pagans also drew up their troops towards the battlefield, marching to the songs and cheers of their women who whipped up their zeal. Moving through the rows and rattling their tambourines, they sang:

"If you go ahead, we shall embrace you, and spread carpets; if you retreat, we shall take offense and be estranged."

They addressed the standard bearers reminding them of their duty:

"Look, Banu Abdul Dar! O defenders of your generation, strike violently with swords."

Fighting begins

When both armies drew near, the standard bearer of the pagans, the most valiant man of the Quraysh, Talha bin Abi Talha Abdari, came forward on his camel and issued a challenge. He was answered by Zubayr bin Awwam ﷺ. Zubayr jumped on to Talha's camel, threw him down to the ground and slew him. "*Allâhu Akbar*!" cried the Prophet ﷺ, and all his men echoed the cry.

After the first ritual encounter, the two armies set upon each other. Khalid bin Waleed, who was then head of the pagan cavalry, attempted three times to reach the rear. Each time he was pushed back by the shower of arrows launched by the Muslim rearguards.

The Muslim soldiers concentrated their attack on the eleven standard bearers of the pagans until they were all wiped out. As the enemy standard sank to the ground, the Muslim soldiers hurled themselves against the enemy. They charged into the ranks of the enemy forces and slew them in large numbers. Two Muslims, Abu Dujana and Hamzah, fought with great prowess, and their heroic feats on the battlefield were to become legendary in Muslim military history.

Tragically, Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib ﷺ, the Lion of Allâh, was martyred in the same battle he had dominated. He was killed by the javelin of Wahshi bin Harb, an Abyssinian slave, who with that successful throw earned his freedom from his master, Jubayr bin Mutim.

Hamzah had killed Jubayr's uncle, Tu'ayma bin Adiy, in the Battle of Badr, and the grieving Jubayr promised Wahshi his freedom in return for Hamzah's head. With his freedom in sight, Wahshi sat

behind a rock awaiting his chance to strike. As Hamzah stood deftly beheading Saba bin Arfat, Wahshi launched his javelin. It pierced Hamzah's abdomen and came out from between his legs. The Lion of Allâh had fallen.

Despite the loss of Hamzah, the Muslims managed to overcome the unbelievers who, faced with yet another defeat, began to flee. The pagan women also scattered as some of the Muslim soldiers gave chase. Some of the Muslim troops set about putting the fallen enemy to the sword and looting the enemy camp.

It was at this point of perceived victory that events began unraveling. The archers who had been entrusted with the safety of their brothers in faith disobeyed the Prophet's explicit orders and deserted their stations to join in the looting. Forty of the rearguards descended the mountain and left the Muslims vulnerable to a comeback attack by the enemy.

When Khalid bin Waleed saw the sudden vacuum created by the disappearance of the Muslim rearguards, he decided it was time to strike again. He and his men wiped out the ten archers guarding the rear. They then went around the mountain and surprised the Muslims from behind. Now that the Muslims were surrounded, Khalid's cavalrymen raised a war cry and rushed back to retrieve their lost honor.

The Prophet ﷺ is rumored dead

Standing at the rear along with seven of the *Ansar* and two men from the *Muhajireen*, the Prophet ﷺ clearly saw Khalid's cavalrymen appear from behind the mountain, and he called out at the top of his voice, "O servants of Allâh, come to me!" The pagans, who were positioned closer to him, heard him call out. One of their squadrons followed his voice and charged his way in a bid to finish him off before help could arrive. As the enemy approached, the Prophet said: "Whoever protects me from them deserves Paradise and will be my Companion in Paradise." A man from the *Ansar* heard the Prophet's call for help and rushed to

shield him at the expense of his own life. The enemy surged toward the Prophet ﷺ and drew even closer. The Prophet repeated his call, and another of his Companions advanced on the enemies and made them retreat at the cost of his life. One by one, all seven *Ansar* fell trying to save the Prophet.

When the seventh *Ansari* was slain, only two of the *Muhajireen*, Talha bin Ubaydullah and Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas remained with the Prophet ﷺ. Now the pagans directed their main attack at the Prophet ﷺ. A rock flew at him, and he fell on his side. One of his lower right teeth was broken, his lower lip was cut, and his helmet was broken, exposing his head and forehead. As an enemy soldier thrust his sword at the Prophet ﷺ, he caught his bone below the eye, and two rings from the Prophet's helmet pierced his face. Someone else struck the Prophet's shoulder with a blow so powerful that it left him in severe pain for about a month. Luckily, he escaped severe injury because of his double coat of mail.

Even as the *Ansar* and *Muhajireen* were risking their own lives to keep the Prophet ﷺ safe, he had incurred injury. Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas unleashed a volley of arrows at the pagans, and the Prophet ﷺ kept supplying him with more arrows from his own quiver, saying encouragingly, "Keep shooting. May my mother and father be sacrificed for you." There was Talha bin Ubaydullah fighting against the whole band of enemies, as if he were the only one on the field. By the end of the battle, he had 35 or 39 injuries. Talha shielded the Prophet ﷺ from the enemies' arrows and swords with his hands until his fingers bled profusely and were palsied. As the arrows pierced his fingers, he gasped involuntarily. The Prophet comforted him: "If you had said *Bismillah*, you would have been lifted by the angels before the very eyes of the people."

With human efforts faltering, Allâh sent down supernatural allies to the rescue of His Prophet. Jibreel (Gabriel) and Mikaeel (Michael) descended and fought on his behalf. More Muslims rushed to the Prophet ﷺ, and they too defended him fiercely. The

first to come to his side was Abu Bakr ﷺ along with Abu Ubaydah bin Jarrah. Abu Bakr ﷺ saw the helmet rings embedded in the Prophet's face and tried to extract them, but it was Abu Ubaydah who succeeded in pulling out the metal rings with his teeth, losing two of them in the process. Then they advanced together to sustain the severely wounded Talha bin Ubaydullah.

Friend and foe alike gravitated toward the Prophet ﷺ, who quite naturally was the focal point of the whole scene. Among the Muslims Abu Dujana, Mus'ab bin Umayr, Umar bin Khattab and Ali bin Abi Talib flanked the Prophet even as the pagan soldiers continued to swarm around him, their attacks penetrating deeper and deeper. The Muslims took all possible measures to beat them back. Some of them were shooting arrows, others putting up defenses, some fighting on fiercely while others resorted to deflecting arrows with their hands.

The enemy targeted the Muslims' standard bearer Mus'ab bin Umayr. Countless swords hacked at his right hand severing it. Mus'ab transferred the standard to his left hand, and he upheld the standard on his knee supported by his breast and neck until his last breath. Since Mus'ab resembled the Prophet to a great extent, his killer, Abdullah bin Qam'a, thought he had slain the Prophet ﷺ and jubilantly shouted out that he had killed Muhammad. The news flew around the pagans who, in a surge of complacence, immediately eased the pressure on the Muslims.

Plight of the encircled Muslims

When the Muslims saw themselves surrounded, they were overtaken by panic and disorder and failed to chalk out a cohesive plan. Some of them escaped to the south and reached Madinah, while others fled towards the mountain pass and took refuge in a camp. Some of them ran towards the Prophet ﷺ to protect him from the onslaught of the enemies, as has already been mentioned. Even as the majority of the Muslims stood their ground, their efforts were ineffectual simply because they were disorganized.

Disorder prevailed in the Muslim ranks so much so that the first row collided with the rear row. The result was that Yaman, the father of Hudhayfah, was killed at the hands of the Muslims themselves. Once the rumor of the Prophet's death filtered in, their morale plummeted even lower. Grief stricken and lost, some of them simply abandoned the field, while others were infused with resolve and rallied saying, "Come, let us die for what the Prophet ﷺ gave his life."

The crisis receded only when Ka'b bin Malik caught a glimpse of the Prophet ﷺ, making his way to join the besieged Muslims. Ka'b recognized the Prophet's eyes although his face was covered with the helmet. He cried loudly: "O Muslims, rejoice! Here is the Prophet."

Ka'b's words galvanized the remaining Muslims, and they streamed to the Prophet's side. Within a short time thirty companies assembled around him. The Prophet decided against further combat, prudently choosing to retreat. He made his way through the rows and successfully led his troops towards the mountain pass. The pagans lost two of their soldiers in a fruitless effort to stop them.

By retreating, the Prophet ﷺ managed to save his army from further losses, losses that had come about from simple disobedience of his orders. Disobedience had changed the Muslim victory into catastrophe, but with Allâh's help the Muslims were pulled back from the precipice.

In the ravine

When the Muslims came out of the siege and holed themselves up in the ravine, some individual skirmishes continued between the Muslims and pagan soldiers. The pagans chose to engage in small strikes rather than start another large-scale battle. They would remain in the battlefield for short periods, men and women alike hunting for their fallen Muslim enemies and mutilating them. Abu Sufyan's wife, Hind bint Utbah, had thirsted for Hamzah's blood

since she had lost her kinsmen to Hamzah's sword. When she saw Hamzah's body, in a gruesome act of vendetta she cut out his belly, extracted his liver and chewed it, but as she could not swallow it, she spat it out.

Ubayy bin Khalaf made another effort to kill the Prophet ﷺ, but was himself struck down. The Prophet ﷺ used his lance to unhorse Ubayy, who bellowed like a wounded ox as he rolled down from his mount. He died at Sarf near Makkah trying to go back to his lines.

A few more men of the Quraysh came headed by Abu Sufyan and Khalid bin Waleed. They scaled the mountain at different points to overtake the Muslims at several places. Umar, along with a band of *Muhajireen*, fought them back and forced them to descend. According to some sources Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas shot three of their men dead with his arrows.

Abu Sufyan and Khalid bin Waleed decided after the last abortive attempt to defeat the Muslims that it was time to return to Makkah. They were satisfied at the damage they had wrought. Even though they had lost twenty-two of their own, they had killed a great number of Muslims. The Muslim body count stood at seventy. Forty-one of the martyrs were from the Khazraj tribe, twenty-four from the Aus, and four from the *Muhajireen*. A Jew was also killed.

At the Muslim camp, it was time to rest and take stock. When the Prophet ﷺ finally sat down to rest, Ali fetched water for him to drink from Mehra, a stream in Uhud. The water smelled so unpleasant that the Prophet ﷺ couldn't drink it. However, he washed his face with it and the rest he poured over his head. His wound started bleeding again, and Fatimah burnt a piece of matting and dressed her father's wounds with the ashes to stop the bleeding. Muhammad bin Muslimah fetched fresh water that the Prophet ﷺ drank gratefully. Because of his wounds, he prayed *Zuhr* sitting, and his Companions adopted the same posture.

The Muslim men were joined by their women who tended to the injured. Among them were Aishah, Umm Ayman, Umm Sulaym

and Umm Sulayt who fetched drinking water in leather flasks, and served it to the wounded.

Dialogue and resolution

Both sides were in a mode of retreat. When the pagans were poised to return to Makkah, Abu Sufyan appeared on Mount Uhud and shouted: "Is Muhammad among you?" Nobody responded from the Muslim side. Abu Sufyan then shouted: "Is Abu Bakr, the son of Abu Qahafa among you?" Once more he was met with silence. He shouted a third time: "Is Umar bin Khattab among you?" This call also went unanswered because the Prophet ﷺ had forbidden the Muslims to make any reply.

The silence satisfied Abu Sufyan, who called out jubilantly, "We have finally been relieved of those three". Hearing these words, Umar ﷺ impetuously roared: "O enemy of Allâh, all whom you named are alive, and Allâh Almighty has more disgrace in store for you."

Abu Sufyan said, "Your slain have been mutilated. I neither ordered nor disliked it." After that he cried, "Glory to Hubal." The Prophet instructed his Companions to counter, "Allâh is the Highest and Most Majestic."

Abu Sufyan then shouted, "We have Uzza while you have none".

The Prophet ﷺ bade his followers answer, "Allâh is our Lord but you have none."

Abu Sufyan reminded the Muslims of their loss, saying, "What a glorious deed we have wrought. This is our revenge for Badr. Victory in war goes by turns; one wins today and the other tomorrow."

Umar retorted, "The scores are certainly not even, for our dead have gone to Paradise and yours to Hell." Taken aback at Umar's conviction, Abu Sufyan conceded, "You people consider it so, and if it is true we are losers."

Then Abu Sufyan called Umar closer and said, "Umar, I ask you in the name of Allâh if we have killed Muhammad."

Umar swore, "By Allâh, this is not true, and he is listening to what you say."

Abu Sufyan was convinced about the truth of Umar's words and complimented his enemy, "To me you are more truthful and upright than Ibn Qam'a." With his parting words, he issued a challenge, "We shall meet again at Badr next year." At this, the Prophet ﷺ had a Companion affirm, "Yes, it is an appointment between us."

The Muslims tend to their own

After this exchange, Abu Sufyan went back, and the pagan troops began leaving the area. They rode their camels and kept their horses by their side to indicate the end of the battle and that they were headed for Makkah. Their inexplicable decision to head back was nothing but a sign of Allâh's grace upon the Muslims, for nothing stood between the pagans and Madinah. Had they pressed on they would have found no opposition in the defenseless city, and the course of history would have been entirely different.

After the departure of the enemy, the Muslims came to the battlefield to take care of the wounded and the martyred. Some of the dead were transported to Madinah, but the Prophet ﷺ ordained that the martyrs be brought back to the site of their deaths and that they be buried in battle dress without a bath and funeral prayer. He also buried two to three martyrs in a single grave. In some cases, he directed his Companions to shroud the martyrs in pairs. The martyr who had learned more of the Qur'an was lowered in the grave first. Paying tribute to their sacrifice in the cause of Allâh, the Prophet ﷺ said, "I shall be a witness unto them on the Day of Resurrection."

As they retrieved the bodies of their martyred brothers, the people came upon the body of Handhla bin Abu Amer above the earth

with water dripping from it. The Prophet ﷺ explained to his men, "The angels are bathing him." Apparently, the newly married Handhla had just consummated his marriage when the call for *Jihad* was made. Without even stopping to bathe, he left his bride and rushed into the battlefield. Handhla fought heroically and was martyred, so the Prophet ﷺ explained that the angels were bathing him to purify his body. Handhla was forever remembered as "*Ghaseel Al-Malaaika*" (one bathed by the angels).

It was time to bury Hamzah as well. The dead hero had earned Allâh's pleasure, and that was more rewarding than the ostentation of a grand burial. In fact, he was shrouded in a sheet so small that when his head was covered, his feet were bared and when his feet were covered, his head was exposed. Some rushes were then put over his feet.

Back to Madinah

The martyrs had been buried and Allâh's blessings invoked upon them. Now it was time for the Prophet ﷺ to return to Madinah. On the way, he stopped to give solace to some women whose relatives had fallen in the field. His invocation of Allâh's blessings upon them comforted them immensely.

Many of the bereaved Muslims bore their losses with patience and took comfort in knowing that their Prophet ﷺ was safe, although they had lost their own loved ones in the bargain. The following incident illustrates the priority the Muslims placed on the Prophet's safety. A group of Muslims returning from the battle encountered a woman from the tribe of Banu Dinar. Her husband, brother and father had all been killed at Uhud. When she was told of each of their deaths, she responded each time, "First tell me about the Prophet." The people replied, "Thanks to Allâh he is safe." But the woman was not satisfied with the men's assurances and asked to see for herself how the Prophet ﷺ was. When the people brought her to him, she said simply, "Now that you are safe, every grief has vanished."

Back in Madinah the Muslims spent the night on high alert. After all, they were still in a state of emergency. Exhausted and wounded, they were also overcome by deep sorrow and remorse at the actions of a few who had risked the life of the Prophet ﷺ himself. They all insisted on guarding the Prophet. The Prophet, on the other hand, felt that it was far more important to monitor the retreating enemy's movements carefully. He wanted to be prepared in case of a surprise attack on Madinah.

The expedition of Hamra Al-Asad

The very next morning, the Prophet ﷺ sent a crier to announce that all those who had fought in the Battle of Uhud should prepare to pursue the enemy. Every Muslim who had fought at Uhud the day before followed the Prophet ﷺ out of Madinah regardless of fatigue and injury. Thus they set out from Madinah and camped at Hamra Al-Asad, eight miles away.

The pagans were camped at Rawha, thirty-six miles from Madinah, holding a war council. Much recrimination was traded as the troops berated their leaders. Why had they squandered the advantage by not entering Madinah?

At this moment, the Muslim camp was also pondering strategy. Ma'bad bin Abi Sa'eed Khaza'i, who was a well-wisher of the Prophet ﷺ, came to him at Hamra Al-Asad and commiserated about the events at Uhud. The Prophet asked him to approach Abu Sufyan and use scare tactics to head the pagans off. Ma'bad accordingly reached Rawha, where the mood was in favor of returning to attack Madinah.

Ma'bad dismayed the pagans with his description of the ferocity of the Muslims and their extensive preparations for a new encounter. "Muhammad has come out with a horde the like of which I have never seen. They are intent on revenge, and their mood is terrifyingly bloodthirsty. I think you will soon spot their vanguard appearing from behind this hill."

The ruse worked. The Makkan troops lost their bravado, and Abu Sufyan confined his response to a similar scare campaign. He decided to do some saber rattling of his own. He instructed a caravan to scare the Muslims by saying that the Makkans were ready for another round. Meanwhile, Abu Sufyan and his soldiers hurried back to Makkah.

Having come so close to defeat, the subdued Muslims who heard this warning were prepared to fight on. The threat of a renewed attack only stiffened their resolve. They responded by quoting the following verse:

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّ ٱلنَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا۟ لَكُمْ فَٱخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَـٰنًا وَقَالُوا۟ حَسْبُنَا ٱللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ ٱلْوَكِيلُ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٧٣]

> "The Hypocrites said, "Verily, the pagans have gathered against you, so fear them!" But this increased the Muslims in faith, and they replied, "Allâh is sufficient for us, and He is the best to determine our affairs." (3:173)

There was no further volley of threats, and the resulting calm is best described in the next verse:

﴿فَٱنقَلَبُوا۟ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمْسَسْهُمْ سُوٓءٌ وَٱتَّبَعُوا۟ رِضْوَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٧٤]

> "Thus they returned with the blessings and favor of Allâh. No evil touched them, and they sought nothing but Allâh's pleasure, and Allâh is munificent beyond measure." (3:174)

Incidents and expeditions

The Battle of Uhud had proved the Muslims' vulnerability. The pagans smelled blood and did not miss a single chance to gore their wounded enemy. In subsequent events, the Muslims experienced several painful losses, some of which are outlined below.

The incident of Raj'i

In Safar, 4 A.H., a delegation of the Adal and Qara tribes came to the Prophet ﷺ. They mentioned a surge of interest in Islam among their people, who wanted to know more about the faith. The Prophet ﷺ sent ten of his Companions headed by Asim bin Thabit. The Muslims, who had set out to teach the tribes the basic tenets of faith and the Qur'ân, learned a bitter lesson about the treachery of the polytheists. At Raj'i, the Adal and Qara set a branch of the Hudhayl tribe upon the Muslims. Nearly one hundred of their archers besieged the ten Muslims on a hill. They assured the Muslims on oath that they would not kill them, but Asim refused to descend, preferring instead to take on the enemy. Seven of the Muslims were killed in the encounter. Again, the attackers pledged that they would not kill the three remaining Muslims, who then surrendered and descended the hill. As they were being bound one of the three commented, "This is the first act of treachery." He then resisted his captors' attempts to tie him and was killed. The remaining two, Khubayb bin Adiy and Zayd bin Dathinna, were carried to Makkah and sold as slaves to their old tormentors, the Quraysh. Their lives were now no longer their own.

Khubayb had killed Harith bin Amir bin Naufal in the battle of Badr, and now Harith's son laid claim to Khubayb's life. Khubayb suffered in prison for some time and then he was carried to Tanyeem to be slain. Before his execution he prayed two *Rak'ahs*. He prayed for Allâh's wrath to overtake his killers, and as he faced his death he recited two couplets:

> "I care not if I am slain a Muslim, and I care not which side of mine is brutalized. This is for Allâh, and if He so wills, He will bless the flesh of every joint."

Abu Sufyan asked Khubayb: "Don't you wish Muhammad were in your place and we had killed him, while you were safe with your family?"

Khubayb countered, "By Allâh, I would not wish to be with my family, if in return Muhammad were to be even pricked by a thorn."

Khubayb was dead, and now Zayd bin Dathinna awaited death at the hands of Safwan bin Umayya. Safwan was given the right to slay Zayd in retribution for the death of his father, Umayya bin Mahrath, at Badr. Some Muslim sources have attributed the above quoted verbal encounter between Abu Sufyan and Khubayb to Zayd bin Dathinna.

The dead Muslims on the mountain at Raj'i were also regarded as trophies by the Quraysh, who sent their men to retrieve Asim's body. But they drew back because of a swarm of hornets buzzing over the body. In this way, Allâh protected Asim's body from desecration at the hands of the polytheists. Asim had sworn never to touch a polytheist nor be touched by one, and his Lord had upheld his vow.

The tragedy at Bir Ma'una

About the same period, the Muslims suffered another setback more tragic than that at Raj'i. Abu Baraa Amir bin Malik, who was known as "*Mal'ab Al-Insa*" (one who plays with lances), sought an audience with the Prophet ﷺ, who then invited him to Islam. Abu Baraa neither accepted nor rejected the Prophet's counsel. He chose instead to volunteer his own opinion about the inclination of the people of Najd toward Islam. He suggested that if the Prophet ﷺ sent some of his Companions to Najd the people there would enter Islam. He also assured the Prophet ﷺ that the Muslims would be under his protection.

The Prophet ﷺ sent off a contingent of seventy Muslims who were well-versed in the Qur'an. They camped at Bir Ma'una, and Haram bin Malhan went to Aamir bin Tufayl, a bitter enemy of Allâh, with a letter from the Prophet. Aamir's response was not to read the letter himself but to order his servant to do so. He took Haram unawares and pierced the latter's body with his lance. With his last breath Haram sighed, "*Allâhu Akbar*! By the Lord of the *Ka'bah*, I have succeeded in my mission."

Aamir then called out to the tribe of Banu Amir to attack the rest of the Muslims, but they refused to break the pledge of protection made by Abu Bara. Aamir then called upon Banu Sulaym and

some of its sub-tribes such as Ral, Dhakwan, Lehyan and Usayya, who readily came to besiege the Companions and put all of them to death save Ka'b bin Zayd and Amr bin Umayya. Ka'b bin Zayd was wounded, and left for dead. Later he was rescued from the scene of the carnage, and he recovered only to be martyred in the Battle of the Trench.

Amr bin Umayya Damri had been grazing his camels along with Mundhir bin Uqba when he saw the vultures hovering at Bir Ma'una. Instantly he guessed the outcome of the Muslims' visit to Aamir bin Tufayl. Mundhir rushed to the spot to rescue his brother Muslims. He took on the enemy and fought until he was overcome. As for Amr bin Umayya, he was taken captive but proved to be more fortunate than the rest of his Muslim brothers. When Aamir bin Tufayl was told that the prisoner belonged to the Mudir tribe, he simply took off a lock of Amr's hair as a trophy and freed him in fulfillment of a vow made by his mother.

Thus it was that Amr bin Umayya escaped death, and he immediately headed toward Madinah. On the way, he came across two men from Banu Kilab at Qarqarah. Taking them to be enemies, Amr killed them both although they had with them a covenant of peace from the Prophet ﷺ. Back at last in Madinah, he informed the Prophet ﷺ of what he had done. The Prophet's only words were: "You have killed two such men whose blood I must redeem."

Both the incidents at Bir Ma'una and Raj'i deeply anguished the Prophet ﷺ. He had sent two missions of peace, and both had ended tragically in the same month. It is said that he received the news of both the tragedies the same night. He found solace in prayer (*Qunoot*), supplicating for the martyred Muslims and calling down Allâh's punishment on their killers. For thirty days, each morning after *Fajr* the Prophet ﷺ prayed against the murderers until at last he received a revelation. Allâh informed him that He had indeed met His martyred slaves. He was pleased with them, and they had been no less pleased with their Lord's treatment of them.

Expedition against Banu Nadir

Other matters demanded the Prophet's attention. Amr bin Umayya's killing of the two men from Banu Kilab had to be redressed. If no blood money was forthcoming, the Muslims would be deemed guilty of violating a pact, and more bloodshed could be expected. Consequently, the Prophet ﷺ went to Banu Nadir along with a few of his Companions to ask them to contribute towards the blood money.

They said to him, "Abul Qasim, we shall do accordingly. Take your seat here. We will fulfill your need." The Prophet ﷺ waited while the Jews consulted privately with one another. Unfortunately, Shaytaan prevailed over their honor, and they decided to murder the Prophet ﷺ. They said to each other, "Who will carry this millstone and drop it on him?" Up rose Amr bin Jahsh to carry out the deed. In the meantime, as the Prophet sat waiting for his hosts to come back with their decision, Jibreel descended and revealed the plot to him. The Prophet ﷺ hurried away and set out for the road to Madinah, where he was joined by his Companions.

Treachery by allies who are bound by a treaty is never a light matter. By plotting against the Prophet ﷺ, Banu Nadir had demonstrated that they could not coexist with the Muslims. Naturally, the Prophet wished to end the alliance and, based on the action of the Jews, assumed that they were at war with one another. He therefore sent Muhammad bin Muslimah to issue an ultimatum to the Jews — since they had forfeited their right to live with the Muslims, they were to leave Madinah within ten days. Any Jew found after the lapse of the deadline would be put to death. After receiving this notice, the Jews began preparing to leave. At that point, Abdullah bin Ubayy, the head of the Hypocrites, sent them a message urging them to stay on, for he had two thousand warriors ready to enter their fortress and defend them. The Hypocrites had once more struck to undermine the

Prophet's position. *Surah Al-Hashr* refers to the tenuous alliance and how it was patched together with lies:

﴿ ۞ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا۟ يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَٰنِهِمُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ لَئِنْ أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا وَإِن قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنصُرَنَّكُمْ وَٱللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَـٰذِبُونَ ﴾ [الحشر: ١١]

"Did you not observe the Hypocrites tell their faithless friends from among the People of the Book, "If you are driven out, we will accompany you. We will never obey your enemies, and if you are attacked, we will defend you." But Allâh is a witness that they are liars." (59:11)

The Jews felt emboldened at such shows of support from their purported friends. They sent a message to the Prophet ﷺ that they were not about to leave Madinah regardless of the consequences.

The Prophet responded, "*Allâhu Akbar*!" and his Companions echoed the cry. It was a call to arms. Entrusting the safety of Madinah to Ibn Umm Maktoom رضي الله عنه and the Muslim standard to Ali, the Prophet and his troops advanced towards the territory of Banu Nadir and laid siege to them. The Jews took refuge in their fortresses and castles and showered arrows and stones at the Muslim army. Since their date groves and gardens stood as a buffer zone, the Prophet ﷺ ordered his men to cut down the trees and set the gardens ablaze. This act sank the spirits of Banu Nadir. After six days of holding out—some say a fortnight—they agreed to lay down arms on condition that they would be allowed to go safely into exile. Their friends among Banu Quraydha had failed to support them, as had the head of the Hypocrites and his allies.

﴿ كَمَثَلِ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنسَـٰنِ ٱكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّى بَرِىٓءٌ مِّنكَ إِنِّىٓ أَخَافُ ٱللَّهَ رَبَّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ ﴾ [الحشر: ١٦]

"Their allies deceived them the way Satan does when he says to a man, "Disbelieve in Allâh." When the man listens to him and commits disbelief, Satan suddenly says, "I am not

responsible for your decision. I fear Allâh, the Lord of the universe!" (59:16)

The Prophet ﷺ allowed the Jews to take all their belongings except their arms. They carried with them whatever they could—even the doors, windows, and beams of their houses.

The Qur'ân refers to this event in the following verse:

﴿ هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَخْرَجَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ مِن دِيَـٰرِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ ٱلْحَشْرِ ۚ مَا ظَنَنتُمْ أَن يَخْرُجُوا۟ ۖ وَظَنُّوٓا۟ أَنَّهُم مَّانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ فَأَتَىٰهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا۟ ۖ وَقَذَفَ فِى قُلُوبِهِمُ ٱلرُّعْبَ ۚ يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُم بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَٱعْتَبِرُوا۟ يَـٰٓأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَبْصَـٰرِ ﴾ [الحشر: ٢]

"Allâh drove out the faithless tribe of Jews from their homes at the first gathering. You did not think that they would leave, and they thought their fortresses would protect them from Allâh! But Allâh approached them in a way they did not expect and cast terror in their hearts. Their homes were destroyed by their own hands as well as by the believers. Reflect on this event, those of you who have eyes!" (59:2)

Thus the Jews left Madinah, most of them settling in Khaybar while a small group migrated to Syria. The land confiscated from the Jews was divided among the first Makkan emigrants, while Abu Dujana and Sahl bin Haneef, two members of the *Ansar*, were given plots because of their financial situation. The Prophet ﷺ used part of the revenue from the land to maintain his wives for the whole year. The rest he spent on defense and for providing horses and arms for the Muslim warriors. Fifty coats of mail, fifty helmets and three hundred swords that had been seized were also distributed among the Muslim troops.

An appointment at Badr

Abu Sufyan had left Uhud with the promise of another military encounter the following year, and with the arrival of Sha'ban, 4 A.H., the Prophet ﷺ preempted his adversary in a march towards

the battlefield. He camped at Badr, where he waited eight days for Abu Sufyan. He had with him a force consisting of 1500 soldiers and 10 horses. Ali bin Abu Talib ﷺ was the standard bearer, while the administration of Madinah was handed over to Abdullah bin Rawaha ﷺ.

Abu Sufyan also set out with an army of 2000 soldiers, including 50 cavalrymen, but from the start he appeared to be lacking fire. Upon arriving at the venue he remarked to his men, "Battle is suitable when there is freshness and greenery throughout so that the animals can graze and we can also drink milk. But now as there is drought everywhere, I am going back. You people should follow me." Abu Sufyan's entire army seemed to share his sentiments and tamely marched back without meeting the enemy.

The Muslims, meanwhile, stayed on in Badr and carried out a number of business transactions. They sold their goods and made handsome profits. The Quraysh had retreated without drawing a single sword, so the Muslims returned with their military reputation in high standing. In Rabi'Al Awwal that same year the Prophet ﷺ launched a punitive attack on a group of bandits at Dumat Al Jandal. At last all the enemies were subdued, and there was peace for an entire year, a year that the Prophet ﷺ was able to spend consolidating the faith and teaching his followers.

The Battle of the Trench

After the expedition against Banu Nadir and the meek departure of the Quraysh from Badr, a year and a half went by without any disturbances. It seemed that the Muslims were finally free to spread their religion and bring about changes in their environment and daily lives, but the idyll was soon to be disrupted.

The exiled Jewish tribes had consolidated their base at Khaybar, and having done so they began to dream of vengeance. Realizing the need to rally as much manpower as possible, they went about seeking allies against the Muslims. Some biographers say that twenty chieftains and leaders of the Khaybar Jews went to the

Quraysh pledging support for a renewed military campaign. When the Quraysh agreed, the Jewish delegation contacted Banu Ghatfan, and they also gave their consent. More and more clans were roped in, and the plan was that each of them should move towards Madinah simultaneously.

Digging the trench

When the news of the coalition reached Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ conferred with his Companions as to strategy. The Muslims being so heavily outnumbered, it was imperative that they come up with an impenetrable defense. Salman Al-Farsi advised that the Muslims should dig a trench to keep the enemy away, and everyone approved of the suggestion.

Madinah was naturally fortified on three fronts. With volcanic plains and granite hills to the east, west and south, the city was exposed only on the north, from where the enemy forces could launch an assault. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ chose to fortify that front. He marked the narrowest spot stretching between the east and west and covering a distance of about one mile. Both belts were connected at this spot by the trench. In the west, the trench began from the north of the Sal'a hills and joined the end of the easterly belt at Shaykhayn.

The Prophet divided his men into units of ten with each unit responsible for digging forty cubits. He himself participated in the task of digging the trench and carrying loads of earth. It was a massive undertaking, and the Muslims worked steadily. Their morale soared as they relied on their faith in Allâh and their devotion to His Prophet ﷺ for moral sustenance. The Companions sang praises of Allâh and the Prophet joined in. When the Prophet sang the Companions responded. They bore with quiet heroism the rigorous hardships before them, particularly the biting cold and gnawing hunger. A handful of barley was procured and cooked in rancid, foul smelling fat. Swallowing the food was a challenge in itself.

Once the men went to the Prophet ﷺ complaining of debilitating hunger. As proof, each showed him a slab of stone tied to his belly to stave off the hunger pangs. The Prophet lifted his shirt. Tied to his abdomen were two slabs of stone.

The pagans had clamored for miracles to confirm the divine nature of the Prophet's message. Allâh had sent them signs that they ignored. During the excavation of the trench, Allâh sent the Muslims several signs of His grace, signs that increased their faith and sustained them through adversity.

On one occasion, Jabir bin Abdullah could not bear to see the Prophet assailed by severe hunger. He slaughtered an ewe, and his wife ground about 2 1/2 kilograms of barley. He then went to the Prophet ﷺ and discreetly invited him and a few of the Prophet's Companions. The Prophet ﷺ accepted the invitation, but brought everyone along—all one thousand of them. Everyone ate until he was full, but the pot remained replete and the bread continued to bake unchecked.

Similarly, once the sister of Nu'man bin Bashir took a handful of dates for her father and maternal uncle. The Prophet ﷺ took the dates and scattered them on a cloth. He then called all the men as they worked away at the trench. Each of them ate to his fill and left, but the dates kept multiplying and could barely be contained within the cloth.

The soil the men encountered was rocky and obdurate. Jabir and his group struck a particularly rocky patch that failed all their efforts. The problem was brought to the notice of the Prophet ﷺ, and as he struck it with his pick, it crumbled into a mound of pliant sand.

Other obstacles became oracles with Allâh's grace. Baraa and his unit came across a large rock. The Prophet ﷺ knelt and said *Bismillah* before he used his pick. A piece of the rock came loose with a light emerging from it. The Prophet ﷺ said, "*Allâhu Akbar*! The keys of Syria have been given to me, and right now I see its

red castle."

The Prophet ﷺ then struck a second blow with his pick and received tidings of the imminent victory over Persia; the last blow signified the conquest of Yemen. In this way the entire rock was demolished, with each blow bringing the Muslims hope.

Across the trench

While the Muslims concentrated on defense, the Quraysh and their followers arrived with an army of 4000 men, 300 horses and 1000 camels. Abu Sufyan rode proudly as the commander-in-chief of the allied forces and their standard bearer was Uthman bin Talha Abdari. They camped at a spot between Jarf and Zaghaba. Opening another front, Banu Ghatfan and their 6000 followers, the men of Najd, pitched camp at the end of the Naqmi valley in the foothills of Mount Uhud. The arrival of two large armies so close to the walls of Madinah posed an enormous threat to the Muslims. Allâh mentions the mammoth military coalition in *Surah Al-Ahzaab*:

﴿إِذْ جَآءُوكُم مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ وَإِذْ زَاغَتِ ٱلْأَبْصَـٰرُ وَبَلَغَتِ ٱلْقُلُوبُ ٱلْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّونَ بِٱللَّهِ ٱلظُّنُونَا۠ ۝ هُنَالِكَ ٱبْتُلِىَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا۟ زِلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا﴾

[الأحزاب: ١٠-١١]

"Behold! They marched upon you from above and below, and then your eyes spun around and your hearts leapt to your throats. You began to doubt Allâh's plan, yet in this was a trial for the believers and an immense jolt." (33:10-11)

But Allâh Almighty kept the believers firm on that occasion. He says:

﴿وَلَمَّا رَءَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا۟ هَـٰذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ وَصَدَقَ ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥ ۚ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّآ إِيمَـٰنًا وَتَسْلِيمًا﴾ [الأحزاب: ٢٢]

"When the believers saw the confederate forces, they said: "This is what Allâh and His Messenger promised us, and Allâh and His Messenger have told us the truth." And it only increased their faith and their submission to Allâh." (33:22)

However, the Hypocrites among the Muslims were fearful and querulous. They said:

﴿مَّا وَعَدَنَا ٱللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُۥٓ إِلَّا غُرُورًا﴾ [الأحزاب: ١٢]

"Allâh and His Messenger have promised us nothing but delusions." (33:12)

Once again the Prophet ﷺ appointed Ibn Umm Maktoom caretaker of Madinah and sent the women and children to take shelter in forts. He then set out with 3000 men and fortified his troops, keeping their backs to Mount Sal'a. In front was the trench that stood between the Muslims and unbelievers.

The pagans arrogantly advanced towards Madinah and the Muslims. As they approached, they caught sight of the trench and stopped in confusion.

"A novel device, a wily ruse!" Abu Sufyan exclaimed in amazement. "This trick is totally unknown to the Arabs." Overwhelmed with fury, the pagans set about trying to find a point where they could cross the trench, but the Muslim archers kept them at bay. A hail of arrows showered the pagans so that they could neither leap across the trench nor fill it with earth.

The Quraysh had no alternative way to lay siege to Madinah. Every morning they came out and attempted to cross the trench while the Muslims guarded every inch of the border and greeted them with arrows and stones. The polytheists made several fruitless attempts to cross the trench and spent days huddled together trying to devise ways to launch their assault. The Muslims for their part were equally determined to make them give up. So intent were they in protecting their lines that the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions missed several prayers, and offered them late around or after sunset, for at that point the "prayer in times of fear" (*Salaah Al-Khauf*) had not yet been ordained upon the Muslims.

Finally, one day a party of the pagan cavalry comprising Amr bin Abdu Wudd, Ikrama bin Abi Jahl, Dharar bin Khattab and a few

others managed to vault over the trench at a narrow spot, while their horses pranced around between the trench and Mount Sal'a. From another side Ali sprang forward along with a few Muslims, and by capturing the point of entry they cut off the pagans' route of escape. Amr bin Abdu Wudd, a ruthless and fearsome warrior, challenged Ali to combat. Ali provoked Amr's anger with his taunts, and he alighted from his horse. The two adversaries fought and jostled, thrust and parried, but ultimately Ali put Amr to the sword.

The rest of the polytheists darted back to their horses. They were so disconcerted that Ikrama left his lance trying to flee, and Naufal bin Abdullah fell into the trench and was put to death by the Muslims. At the end of the skirmish, ten pagans and six Muslims lay dead.

An arrow hit Sa'd bin Mu'adh and his jugular vein was severed, but miraculously he survived his injury. He had prayed to Allâh to preserve his life only if the decisive battle against the Quraysh was yet to be fought. His other supplication had been to stay alive to see the destruction of Banu Quraydha, and as we shall see, his prayer was answered.

Banu Quraydha's treachery

After the Battle of Uhud, the Jewish tribe of Banu Quraydha had entered into a pact with the Prophet ﷺ. But in the midst of the battle of the trench, Huyay bin Akhtab, the chieftain of Banu Nadir, met Ka'b bin Asad, the chieftain of Banu Quraydha, and got him to renege on the agreement. After some initial hesitation, Ka'b broke the covenant and sided with the Quraysh and the pagans.

The stronghold of Banu Quraydha lay to the south of Madinah, which was where the Muslims had their fortifications and where they had left their women and children, while the men were massed along the north. With the breach of faith by Banu Quraydha, the Muslim women and children were imperiled. The Prophet ﷺ rushed Muslima bin Aslam at the head of 200 men and

Zayd bin Haritha with another 300 men to protect the Muslim women and children. Moreover, Sa'd bin Mu'adh and Sa'd bin Ubada were sent behind them to investigate the matter.

The Prophet's envoys found the Jews openly antagonistic. Banu Quraydha disparaged the Prophet ﷺ, saying, "Who is the Prophet of God? We have not entered any pact with Muhammad." The two emissaries reported the situation to the Prophet in just three words, "Adal and Qara," indicating that the treachery of the Adal and Qara tribes at Raj'i was being repeated by Banu Quraydha.

The Muslims were distressed about their new found vulnerability. On this occasion, too, the Hypocrites bared their fangs. Some of them bemoaned, "Muhammad gave us his word that we would possess the treasure of Caesar and Chosroes, and here we are in such a plight that we feel unsafe even to answer the call of nature." Others among them fumed, "The promise made to us by Allâh and His Messenger was nothing but delusion." Some jeered at the Muslims, "O men of Yathrib, you cannot stand the onslaught. Go back!"

Another group of Hypocrites, after deciding to flee the spot, came to the Prophet ﷺ seeking permission to go back, pleading that their houses were unprotected. When the news of Banu Quraydha's treachery reached the Prophet ﷺ, he covered his face and head with a piece of cloth and lay flat on his back for a while, quietly introspective. When he arose, however, it was to give the Muslims good tidings.

Although he had taken the step of sending the two companies under Zayd and Muslima to protect the women and children, the Prophet ﷺ contemplated sending a message to Uyaina bin Hisn to renew their old agreement. He was willing to cede one-third of the fruits of Madinah if Uyaina would retreat with Banu Ghatfan. Sa'd bin Mu'adh and Sa'd bin Ubadah, the two chieftains of the *Ansar*, voiced their opposition to any negotiations with their ally turned enemy, saying, "When both they and we were polytheists, they

dared not expect even a grain. Today, when Allâh has given us Islam and conferred honor upon us through you, are we expected to give them our goods? By Allâh, we shall offer them our swords alone." The Prophet ﷺ found their argument reasonable and dropped the idea of sending the offer.

The coalition splits and the battle ends

At this point, when war seemed imminent, Nu'aym bin Mas'ood Ashaja'i came to the Prophet ﷺ. He belonged to the Ghatfan tribe and had strong ties with both the Quraysh and the Jews. He confided, "O Messenger of Allâh, I have embraced Islam and my people are still unaware of my faith. What is your command?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "You are alone. What can you do? However, try to split them if you can, for war is nothing but strategy."

Nu'aym accordingly went off to Banu Quraydha, who received him with honor. He said to them, "You know very well my regard for you. Now I am about to tell you something which you must keep secret." Intrigued, they agreed. Nu'aym then said:

> "You all know very well what happened to Banu Qaynuqa and Banu Nadir. Now you have lent your support to the Quraysh and Ghatfan. But their situation is quite different from yours. This is your territory wherein are your women, children, wealth and property. You cannot go anywhere else, while your allies' territory, wealth and property and households lie far off. Only if they find an opportunity will they act. Otherwise, they will leave for their own havens leaving you at the mercy of Muhammad, and he will take revenge at will."

After having sown the seeds of disquiet, Nu'aym left to meet with the Quraysh. Then addressing all the chieftains collectively, he began: "You know I am a great well-wisher of you all." They all chorused their assent. Nu'aym continued: "Now I shall tell you something, but you must keep it a secret."

"We will do as you say," they replied in one voice.

Nu'aym said, "The Jews regret the breach of trust they have committed. They fear that you will go back, leaving them at Muhammad's mercy. To appease Muhammad, they have offered to hand you over to him as hostages. Stay alert and do not yield anyone hostage if they should ask you to do so."

Then Nu'aym called on the Ghatfan with the same ploy. His stratagem succeeded in creating mutual suspicion among the allies. When Abu Sufyan sent a message to Banu Quraydha to launch a joint attack the following day, he got a cold response. The Quraydha answered, "It is Saturday, and we cannot fight. Calamities have befallen us only because we broke the rules of the Sabbath. Secondly, we refuse to fight along with you unless you send us hostages. You might leave for your destinations and leave us defenseless."

At this the Quraysh and the Ghatfan said, "By God, Nu'aym was right." The Quraysh then sent a message to the Quraydha informing them that they would not send any hostages and insisted on them setting out for battle. At this rejoinder Banu Quraydha said, "Nu'aym spoke the truth." The alliance was thus shattered.

Meanwhile, the Muslims spent this period of impending danger in supplication. "O Allâh, shelter us and preserve us from all dangers," the Prophet ﷺ invoked his Lord. "O Allâh, Sender of the Book and Speediest in taking Account, vanquish the enemy. O Allâh, give them a tremendous jolt."

In answer to the Muslims' prayer, Allâh sent down a violent storm and an army of angels against the enemy forces. Their utensils were overturned and their tents uprooted. All their belongings were strewn across the camp. The freezing cold also shook their resolve. Disheartened and dejected, they prepared to withdraw.

That night the Prophet ﷺ sent Hudhayfah to gather information. Hudhayfah went deep into the enemy front and came back unaffected by the storm or the cold. His news about the retreating enemy relieved the Muslims, and they all went to sleep. The next

morning they found the battlefield deserted.

The enemy forces had assembled in Shawwal, 5 A.H., and for one long month the Muslims had lived under the threat of a massive attack on all fronts. It was in Dhul Qa'dah that the enemy coalition finally dispersed. It had been their biggest ever attempt to capture Madinah and annihilate the Muslims, but Allâh had confounded their machinations. With the failure of such hardy warriors as the Quraysh and Banu Ghatfan, quite naturally the smaller enemy tribes took heed. They did not dare take on the Muslims, and Madinah was safe at last. The Prophet ﷺ declared to his men: "Now we shall attack them and they will not attack us. Our army will march upon them from now on."

Battle of Banu Quraydha

On his return from the Battle of the Trench, as the Prophet ﷺ prepared to take a bath in the apartment of Umm Salamah, Jibreel came to him. He informed the Prophet ﷺ that he and other angels were being sent to terrify Banu Quraydha and inflict havoc on their fortresses.

Following Jibreel's news, the Prophet sent out an announcement that every one who followed him was to perform the *'Asr* prayer at Banu Quraydha. It was time for the Muslims to witness an act of divine intervention and draw comfort from it. The Prophet entrusted the affairs of the state to Ibn Umm Maktoom and sent out an advance party under Ali. Banu Quraydha spotted the approaching Muslims and began hurling abuses at the Prophet ﷺ. The rest of the Muslims also made quick preparations to join the vanguard, but were delayed by the advent of *'Asr*. They halted for prayer and were late in reaching Banu Quraydha. The Prophet ﷺ set out accompanied by the *Muhajireen* and the *Ansar* and halted at Ana, a famous well of Banu Quraydha.

As it happened, even before the Muslim forces got there, Allâh cast terror into the hearts of Banu Quraydha. They shut themselves in their castles, too terrified to confront the Muslim warriors who

arrived to lay siege. The Jews sent word to the Prophet ﷺ that they wished to consult with Abu Lababa, who was then sent there as chief negotiator. Seeing him approach, the men rushed towards him while their women and children began to weep bitterly. Their tears and lamentations moved Abu Lubaba deeply. They said to him, "Do you think it desirable that we submit to Muhammad?"

"Yes," replied Abu Lubaba, and then he pointed to his throat, indicating that all of them would be put to death. Instantly it occurred to him that he had betrayed Allâh and His Messenger by giving the enemy information through his gesture. He hastened back, went straight to the Prophet's mosque and tied himself to one of the pillars, vowing that the Prophet ﷺ alone would unfasten him. When the Prophet ﷺ heard what Abu Lababa had done, he remarked, "Had he come to me I would have invoked Allâh's forgiveness upon him. Since he has imprisoned himself of his own volition, I will leave him in the same state until Allâh Almighty decides his fate."

The long siege disheartened Banu Quraydha. Twenty-five days passed, and they finally surrendered to the Prophet ﷺ. He imprisoned the men and kept the women separate. The people of Aus asked him to show mercy to their old allies just as he had done with Banu Qaynuqa.

Wisely, the Prophet ﷺ avoided putting himself in the position of sole arbiter of the captives' fates. He asked the people of Aus, "Would you let an arbitrator from amongst you decide?" They nodded, and to their pleasure the Prophet appointed their chief, Sa'd bin Mu'adh, judge.

The wound Sa'd had received in the Battle of the Trench had left him confined to Madinah. He was summoned to the Muslim camp, and as he rode up, the Prophet ﷺ said to the people, "Rise up to help him." Obediently the people rose and advanced to help Sa'd. They milled around him clamoring, "Sa'd, treat your allies kindly." Sa'd did not reply. When the people grew insistent with their

pleas, he said, "This is the time when Sa'd cares least about the reproaches of those who reproach Allâh Almighty."

Sa'd's words were an emphatic rejection of the people's requests. They knew then that no leniency was to be expected, and some people returned to Madinah and announced the demise of the captives.

When Sa'd dismounted, and he was told that Banu Quraydha had declared their willingness to accept his verdict, he pronounced his judgment—the men were to be killed, the women and children to be taken captive, and the property to be divided among the Muslim community.

The Prophet remarked, "The judgment you have passed on them was passed by Allâh Almighty in the seven heavens. This judgment is also in accordance with the law of the Jews; in fact, it shows more compassion than is found in Jewish law."

Following Sa'd's decision, Banu Quraydha were brought to Madinah. They were confined in the house of a woman of Banu Najjar—the daughter of Harith. Pits were dug in the marketplace of Madinah, and the prisoners were brought in groups and beheaded in these pits. Some sources put their number at 400, while others place it between 600 and 700. Only one woman was put to death. She had thrown a hand mill at Khalaad bin Suwayd and killed him.

Along with them, Huyayy bin Akhtab, the chieftain of Banu Nadir was also killed. He was one of those twenty chieftains of the Jews who had orchestrated the alliance between the Quraysh and Banu Ghatfan. He it was who had swayed Banu Quraydha to break their pact with the Muslims, pledging them his support and saying he was ready to share their fate. He remained with them during the siege and their subsequent surrender, and was finally put to death with them.

Some individuals of Banu Quraydha had embraced Islam before the surrender and escaped punishment. The booty amounted to

1500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 2000 lances, 500 shields, and a large number of goods, vessels, and livestock. The Prophet ﷺ then kept one-fifth of the date palms and the captives, and he divided the rest of the booty among the soldiers—the foot soldiers got one part and the cavaliers received three parts of the whole—one portion for the soldier and two for his horse.

The prisoners were sent to Najd and arms bought in lieu of them. However, the Prophet ﷺ chose Rayhana bint Zayd bin Amr bin Khanafah for himself. It is said that he married her after setting her free. She died after the Prophet's Farewell Hajj.

When the Muslims did away with Banu Quraydha, the prayer of Sa'd bin Mu'adh, the righteous servant of Allâh, was answered. He lay in a tent by the Prophet's mosque so that the Prophet could visit him and inquire after his health. One day a she-goat leaped on him and caused his wound to bleed again. Sa'd succumbed to his injury. It is said that angels lifted his coffin.

Abu Lubaba, who had imprisoned himself in the Prophet's mosque for his hint to Banu Quraydha about their fate, had spent six nights tied to a pillar. His wife would unfasten him at prayer time, and afterwards he would again tie himself to the pillar. Then a verse regarding Abu Lubaba was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ while he was at Umm Salamah's house. Allâh revealed He had forgiven Abu Lubaba. People rushed to Abu Lababa with the good news and tried to untie him, but he refused to be unbound saying that none but the Prophet would do it. The Prophet unfastened him when he came out to offer *Fajr* prayer and events came to a close.

After the Battle of Banu Quraydha, the Prophet ﷺ led a number of expeditions to consolidate the peace he had won. Some of his important military excursions are described in the following section.

· **Abu Rafi Sallam Bin Abul Huqayq is killed**

Abu Rafi was a wealthy Jewish merchant from Hijaz who had settled in Khaybar. He was instrumental in organizing the coalition

against the Muslims. Once the threat of the coalition receded and the Banu Quraydha were put to the sword, it was decided that Abu Rafi was too dangerous to be left unchecked. Muslims from the Aus tribe had killed Ka'b bin Ashraf and eliminated a major threat against the Muslims. Their success had brought them acclaim from the community. Now the Khazraj tribe wanted the assignment to silence Abu Rafi, and five men from among them rose to carry out the mission in Dhul Hijjah, 5 A.H.

Abu Rafi's fortress lay on the outskirts of Khaybar. The Khazraj men under Abdullah bin Atik reached there at sunset. Abdullah asked his men to wait nearby and went off by himself to the fortress gate. He squatted there casually as if he were one of the inhabitants. The watchman saw him and said, "O servant of God, come back in. I need to close the gate."

Abdullah needed no second invitation. He complied and as soon as he entered, he hid himself. Late that night he stole the keys and opened the gate to facilitate his escape. Then he headed for Abu Rafi's rooms. He took the precaution of locking from inside every door that he opened. The darkness of the chamber and the slumber of its inhabitants gave no clue as to Abu Rafi's whereabouts. "Abu Rafi," Abdullah called out softly.

"Who is out there?" Abu Rafi asked. Abdullah followed the voice and struck Abu Rafi with his sword, managing to injure but not kill him. Abu Rafi screamed in pain. Unfazed, Abdullah left the room only to reenter pretending to be one of the household. Disguising his voice, he came up and inquired, "Abu Rafi, what was that noise?"

"May your mother be destroyed! Someone just struck me with a sword," Abu Rafi shouted in pain and fury. Abdullah approached him and struck once more, but the blow was not fatal. He then plunged the sword into Abu Rafi's belly and left him bleeding. He opened the doors one by one and came out. The moon was out, but because of his bad vision, Abdullah missed his step and hurt his

leg. His turban wound around his leg, he sat down in the shadows by the gate waiting until cockcrow when a man intoned from atop the wall of the fortress, "I announce the death of Abu Rafi, the merchant of Hijaz."

The mission was over, and, satisfied, Abdullah returned to his companions. Safe in Madinah again, they reported to the Prophet ﷺ, who saw Abdullah's bandaged leg and ran a hand over it and healed it. It was a symbol that one more source of hurt had disappeared, and one more enemy had been vanquished.

The chief of Yamamah is captured

Thumama bin Uthal was the chieftain of Yamamah. His hatred of Islam and the Prophet ﷺ impelled him to make an attack on the Prophet's life. Egged on by Musaylimah the Liar, who pretended to be a prophet and had his own reasons for wanting the Prophet ﷺ dead, Thumama set out in disguise in Muharram, 6 A.H. His objective was to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ, but he was captured by a party of Muslim horsemen returning from a punitive expedition against Banu Bakr bin Kilab.

The Muslims under Muhammad bin Muslimah took Thumama back with them to Madinah, where they left him bound to a pillar in the Prophet's mosque. The Prophet ﷺ saw the captive and asked him, "What do you expect, Thumama?"

"I expect good, for if you kill me, you will kill one whose blood will be avenged. If you show me favor, you will show it to one who is gracious; if you want property, you will be given as much as you wish."

The Prophet ﷺ left him there. The following day the same question was asked with the same answer being given. The third day at the end of the same conversation the Prophet ﷺ ordered Thumama released. Thumama, it seems, had spent the three days in contemplation of issues more profound than the matter of his release, for upon being freed he bathed and asked to be admitted into Islam. Later, he said to the Prophet ﷺ, "I swear to Allâh, O

Muhammad, no face on the face of the earth was more abhorrent to me than yours, but now your face is the dearest of all to me. I also swear to Allâh that no religion was more hateful to me than yours in the entire world, but now it is the dearest of all to me."

Thumama left Madinah to perform *Umrah* in Makkah, where the Quraysh heaped vituperation on him for his change of heart. Thumama's answer was swift. "By Allâh, not a grain of wheat will reach you from Yamamah until the Prophet ﷺ permits." Thumama spoke in earnest, and the Quraysh were left in despair, for not a single caravan was allowed to carry wheat to the Quraysh. A letter was sent to the Prophet ﷺ asking for the embargo to be lifted, and only when he recommended selling grain to the Makkans did Thumama resume trade with them.

Expedition of Banu Lihyan

In Usfan, in the heart of the Hijaz, lived Banu Lihyan, the tribe that had ambushed the seventy Muslims at Raj'i. The memory of that tragic incident filled the Prophet ﷺ with the desire to punish Banu Lihyan, but he was forced to deal with several emergencies that demanded his attention, the Battle of the Trench was one among them. Soon, however, the calm following the failed coalition gave him the opportunity to claim retribution. With an army of two hundred men and twenty cavaliers, he marched upon the murderous Banu Lihyan in Rabi' Al-Awwal, 6 A.H.

The party reached Batn Gharan, a valley between Amj and Usfan, site of the massacre. There the Prophet ﷺ prayed for the martyrs and halted for two days. When Banu Lihyan heard of the march against them, they took refuge in the hills and eluded capture, so the Prophet ﷺ went on to Usfan with a squad of ten cavaliers in the vanguard. They moved up to Karaa' Al-Ghamaim. After fourteen days, the Muslim forces returned to Madinah.

Abul Aas accepts Islam

In Jamadi Al-Awwal, 6 A.H., the Prophet ﷺ received news of a Qurayshi caravan returning from Syria, and dispatched 170

cavaliers headed by Zayd bin Haritha to ‘Is. The caravan was led by Abul Aas, the husband of Zaynab, one of the Prophet’s four daughters. Husband and wife had been estranged for three years, since Zaynab had migrated to Madinah with her father after her husband refused to accept Islam. The Muslims rounded up the entire caravan except for Abul Aas, who fled to Madinah and took shelter with Zaynab. He asked her to intervene and to request her father for the return of the caravan's cargo. The Prophet ﷺ granted Zaynab's request.

Abul Aas, known for his trading skills and his integrity, went back to Makkah, returned the goods to their rightful owners, and then embraced Islam. He then migrated to Madinah, where he was reunited with Zaynab. Since the verse forbidding marriage between unbelievers and Muslim women had not yet been revealed, the marriage was kept intact.

The Prophet ﷺ sent a number of cavalry units (*Saraya*) during this period. They were significant in that they quelled enemy uprisings and established peace and order in far off areas.

The expedition of Banu Al-Mustaliq or Muraysi’

Among the expeditions sent by the Prophet, the one against Banu Al-Mustaliq in Sha‘ban, 5 or 6 A.H., was a prominent event in Islamic history. A branch of the Banu Khuzaa clan, which was on friendly terms with the Muslims, Banu Al-Mustaliq had sided with the Quraysh and were preparing for an attack on the Prophet ﷺ. Baridah bin Khusayb was sent to gather intelligence and came back to Madinah and confirmed the report. Once more it was time for the Prophet ﷺ to leave Madinah in the hands of another, some say it was Zayd bin Haritha رضي الله عنه, and march out against the enemy.

With an army of seven hundred men, the Prophet ﷺ surprised Banu Al-Mustaliq who were encamped at a spring named Muraysi’ on the outskirts of Qudayd. Some of them were killed, their women and children were rounded up, and their property and livestock seized. The operation lasted two nights.

Among the prisoners was Juwayriyah, the daughter of the wealthy Harith bin Darar. She accepted Islam in Madinah, and the Prophet set her free and then married her. In deference to Juwayriyah, who gained the status of "Mother of the believers" with her marriage to the Prophet ﷺ, one hundred families from Banu Al-Mustaliq were set free. They had entered Islam, and the Prophet's Companions released them saying they were the Prophet's relatives by marriage. Juwayriyah had thus brought her people good fortune.

As expeditions go, the campaign against Banu Al-Mustaliq was noteworthy not because of its military importance but because it gave rise to two extremely distressing and painful events which rent the Muslim community and the Prophet's heart.

While the Muslims were at the spring in Muraysi, a man from the *Ansar* clashed with a *Muhajir*. The *Ansari* was beaten and called the other *Ansar* to his rescue, while the *Muhajir* called out to the *Muhajireen*. The people who came up polarized themselves according to their place of origin—Makkah and Madinah. As the calls "O *Ansar*!" "O *Muhajireen*" rang out, the Prophet ﷺ recognized the ugly spirit of factionalism threatening the brotherhood of the Muslims, and he intervened immediately.

"I am still among you," he said. "I hear calls from the Days of Ignorance. Ignore them, for they are foul." Contritely, the two groups dispersed and returned to the path of brotherhood and unity.

Meanwhile, a large number of men from the faction of the Hypocrites were present on this expedition, as was their leader, Abdullah bin Ubayy. The incident at the spring was fodder for making mischief and nurturing resentment. He addressed the *Ansar*:

> "How dare they [the *Muhajireen*] rise up against us? Here we are in our own country and they have come in and tried to outnumber us. By God, it is just as the ancients said: Feed the dog, and it will bite you. I swear by God that when we return to Madinah, the worthy and noble ones will drive out

the unworthy wretches."

By the worthy, he was referring to himself, of course, while the unworthy one in his eyes who deserved to be driven out was the Prophet ﷺ.

Admonishing his men, he continued:

> "You yourselves have wrought this. You allowed them to settle in your country and shared your property with them. By God, had you held back and not been so generous, they would have surely gone elsewhere."

Listening to Abdullah spew out his venom was a young Companion of the Prophet, Zayd bin Arqam ﷺ, who immediately brought the matter to the Prophet's attention. Abdullah bin Ubayy was sent for and asked about his diatribe, which he denied upon oath, swearing the Prophet ﷺ had been misinformed. His glib words saved him on that occasion, but the revelation of *Surah Al-Munaafiqoon* published the truth, and the name of Abdullah bin Ubayy stands disgraced until the Day of Judgment.

Ironically, Abdullah's son, who bore the same name as his father, was a true believer who was incensed at his father's machinations. He rushed to Madinah ahead of the returning troops and stood there barring his father's way. As he faced his father, he said:

> "By Allâh, until the Prophet ﷺ permits, you will not be allowed to advance an inch, for it is he who he is honorable and you who are dishonorable."

The Prophet ﷺ told Abdullah to allow his father back into Madinah, and a mortified Abdullah bin Ubayy brooded over how to destroy the peace. What had begun as a simple disagreement between two men at a spring had escalated into a rift dividing an entire community and a father and his son, but this episode also showed that the only kinship of consequence is through righteousness and faith.

The slander against Aishah, Mother of the believers

The journey back to Madinah was long, and after a halt, late one night, the Prophet ﷺ decided to break camp. 'Aishah رضي الله عنها, who realized she had lost her necklace, had gone off to look for it and returned to find the camp had moved on without her. Although her empty howdah (riding enclosure) seemed very light, the men who saddled it ascribed it to 'Aishah's diminutive frame. She, on the other hand, fell asleep unafraid. Surely they would discover her absence and would return for her, she thought.

She lay sleeping until she was discovered by Safwan bin Mu'attal Salami ﷺ, a Companion of the Prophet. Safwan, who was a heavy sleeper and a late riser, had been assigned to retrieve anything inadvertently left behind by the troops. His job was to follow the trail left by the marching troops. When he drew near, he recognized Aishah, whom he had seen in the days before veiling was enjoined upon Muslim women.

He exclaimed, "To Allâh we belong and to Him we return!" in greeting, and these were the only words he spoke to her. Aishah covered her face instantly. Silently, out of reverence for the Prophet's wife, Safwan brought his camel for her to mount. He held the camel's reins and walked ahead, and they traveled in this manner. It was noon by the time they caught up with the rest of the people, who had encamped shortly before.

The sight of Aishah's camel being led by Safwan gladdened the malevolent heart of Abdullah bin Ubayy. Here at last was the perfect way to pierce the heart of the Prophet ﷺ and tarnish the reputation of his favorite wife. He would begin a lie about how Aishah and Safwan had deliberately stayed behind together. Insinuations and malicious lies were woven and embroidered until they began to look like the fabric of truth. Abdullah's friends and allies gleefully repeated the lies not just among themselves but to the general body of credulous Muslims, who were blinded by the sandstorm of lies swirling around them.

‘Aishah, on the other hand, fell ill after her return to Madinah and remained confined to bed for a month. Although Madinah was buzzing with the scurrilous and false rumors of her clandestine meeting with Safwan, she was unaware of what was being said. The only hurt she felt was through an awareness that her husband was uncharacteristically cold and distant with her. Where was the tenderness he reserved for her? Why did he leave immediately after inquiring about her health without even sitting by her side? Moreover, he had nothing to say to her after exchanging greetings.

The Prophet ﷺ himself was considerably hurt that the community was giving credence to what could only be a lie. His wives had to be beyond reproach, but since ‘Aishah had unwittingly become a target of slander, he himself had to act to control the damage done to his household and the community at large. His anguish grew with the fact that he had not had a single revelation during this period. He consulted his Companions about how he should deal with the situation affecting his household and all of Madinah. Ali subtly advocated separation, but Usama and the others counseled otherwise.

Following this consultation, the Prophet ﷺ ascended the pulpit and declared that it was up to the people to seek redress from the one whose evil had touched even their Prophet’s household. His words were taken to heart by the chieftain of the Aus tribe, who pronounced the death sentence on Abdullah bin Ubayy for beginning the scandal. Since Abdullah bin Ubayy belonged to the Khazraj tribe, their chieftain took the sentence as an affront to the entire tribe. More disunity and ill will were bred until the Prophet ﷺ intervened to heal the breach.

By then ‘Aishah herself had recovered from her illness, and one night she went to relieve herself accompanied by Umm Mistah. In the darkness, Umm Mistah tripped over her sheet and then proceeded to curse her son. ‘Aishah rebuked her for her imprecation, but the lady told ‘Aishah she was justified in cursing him. After all, wasn’t he also parroting the same lies about

‘Aishah?

“What lies,” asked ‘Aishah? The whole story came rushing out, and Aishah listened silently. When she returned it was to ask the Prophet’s permission to go to her parents’ house. Once she got there her parents sorrowfully confirmed that all of Madinah was whispering about ‘Aishah and Safwan. The tears would not stop. Two nights and a day went by, and Aishah cried while her parents watched and wept too.

After the second night had passed, the Prophet ﷺ came to see ‘Aishah. Struggling with his own emotions, he said, as befitting the spiritual head of the community and her husband, “‘Aishah! I have come to know of this and that about you. If you are innocent, Allâh will bring your innocence to light. If you have sinned, then repent and seek Allâh’s forgiveness, for He forgives those who repent.”

‘Aishah listened without tears. She asked her parents to reply on her behalf, but they sat mute with grief and reverence for the Prophet ﷺ. Then ‘Aishah spoke in ringing tones:

> “By Allâh, I know that the lie has been repeated so much so that it has stuck to your hearts and you people have taken it as true. Now if I say I am innocent—and Allâh knows well that I am innocent—you will not accept it as true. In case I confess anything—and Allâh knows very well that I am quite innocent—you will take it as true. Thus, I, for myself and for you, say what the father of Yusuf عليه السلام said:
>
> ﴿ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴾ [يوسف: ١٨]
>
> “…Patience is beautiful. I seek the help of Allâh against what you assert.” (12:18)

With these words she turned her back on the Prophet ﷺ and lay down. At that moment, Allâh sent the Prophet ﷺ a revelation. When the state of inspiration ended, the Prophet ﷺ was smiling. He said, ”O Aishah! Allâh has declared you innocent!”

"Get up and face the Prophet," said Aishah's mother to her daughter.

Aishah's reply was, "By Allâh! I shall not get up to face him. I shall praise Allâh alone."

The verses that were revealed on this occasion pertained to the exoneration of Aishah and are to be found in *Surâh Al-Noor*, verses eleven through twenty. They state clearly that the people who invented the lie about a chaste woman (whose only sin was negligence) had sinned and so had those who repeated it and believed it.

The verses specifically ordain punishment for slanderers and stipulate a code of conduct for Muslims to safeguard the chastity of their women. It is made a part of one's faith to avoid suspicion, and to refuse to believe in and or circulate slander. To repeat unfounded gossip is to defile oneself and society, to bring in discord, and to harm believing women, and in the following verses, Allâh lays down strict punishment for slanderers:

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ جَآءُو بِٱلْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ ٱمْرِيٍٕ مِّنْهُم
مَّا ٱكْتَسَبَ مِنَ ٱلْإِثْمِ وَٱلَّذِى تَوَلَّىٰ كِبْرَهُۥ مِنْهُمْ لَهُۥ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ○ لَّوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ
ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا۟ هَٰذَآ إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ ○ لَّوْلَا جَآءُو عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ
شُهَدَآءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا۟ بِٱلشُّهَدَآءِ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْكَٰذِبُونَ ○ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِى مَآ أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ○ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُۥ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ
وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُم مَّا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُۥ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ○ وَلَوْلَآ إِذْ
سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُم مَّا يَكُونُ لَنَآ أَن نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهَٰذَا سُبْحَٰنَكَ هَٰذَا بُهْتَٰنٌ عَظِيمٌ ○ يَعِظُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ أَن
تَعُودُوا۟ لِمِثْلِهِۦٓ أَبَدًا إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ○ وَيُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾

[النور: ١١-١٨]

"Those who brought forward the lie are a body among yourselves. Do not consider it bad for you. On the contrary, it is good for you. Every man will be given the sin he earned, and those who were primarily responsible will receive a great punishment. When the believers heard the rumor, why

did they not assume the best about their own people and say, 'This allegation is an obvious lie?' Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove the accusation was true? Since they did not produce any witnesses, they stand as liars before Allâh. And were it not for the grace and mercy of Allâh on you in this world and in the Hereafter, you would have been seized by a tremendous punishment for what you uttered. You said something that you had no knowledge of and considered it but a small thing, but to Allâh it was a very great matter. And when you heard the slanderous lie, why did you not say, 'We should not talk about this. Glory be to Allâh! This is a most serious allegation!' Allâh admonishes you to never behave in such a way again if you are indeed believers. And Allâh makes His signs, lessons and revelations clear for you, for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise." (24:11-18)

His heart thus unburdened of grief, the Prophet ﷺ went to his Companions and recited before them the verses revealed concerning Aishah's acquittal. In compliance with the divine injunction in the verses, he ordered punishment for the slanderers, eighty lashes to each of the two males and one female from among the Muslims who had repeated the lies.

Hassan bin Thabit, Mistah bin Athatha and Hamnah bint Jahsh, in bearing the punishment, escaped punishment in the Hereafter and were forgiven. However, Abdullah bin Ubayy, the leader of the liars and his accomplices, got off unscathed, unrepentant. They face a far more terrible punishment in the Hereafter.

Departure for *Umrah* and arrival at Hudaybia

Shortly after the resolution of the slanderous campaign against Aishah, the Prophet ﷺ had a vision. He saw himself and his Companions, entering the Sacred Mosque of Makkah, praying there and then shaving their heads. The Companions were informed forthwith that they were to perform *Umrah* shortly, and

the Arabs living around Madinah were also invited to join them on the journey. They, however, were skeptical about going into the stronghold of the Quraysh. They also doubted the Prophet ﷺ and his followers would ever return to Madinah if they did make it to Makkah. They begged off saying the affairs of their property were pressing, and asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray for them.

The Prophet ﷺ set out from Madinah along with 1,400 *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* on Monday, Dhul Qa'dah 1, 6 A.H. He took along sacrificial animals. At Dhul Halifah, the animals were made to put on collars and their humps were slit, a clear indication that they were meant for sacrifice after performing *Umrah*. The Muslims then donned *Ihraam* and entered the state of consecration.

The Prophet then resumed his journey and reached Usfan. At this stage, the scout sent ahead by the Prophet ﷺ came back with the news that the Quraysh were encamped at Dhul Tawa, determined to prevent the Muslims from performing *Umrah*, even if it meant another war. They had dispatched Khalid bin Waleed to Qura Al-Ghamim near Usfan to block off the route to Makkah, and had called on the neighboring tribes for support.

The Prophet ﷺ conferred with his Companions about the situation, their choices being either to attack the allied tribes or to march ahead to the *Ka'bah* and fight those obstructing their worship of Allâh.

Abu Bakr Siddeeq ؓ opined, "We have come to perform *Umrah,* not to fight; hence we will fight only against those who stand in our way." The Prophet ﷺ agreed with Abu Bakr, and it was decided to go on to Makkah.

At midday, the Muslims prayed. Khalid bin Waleed, who was watching their movements closely, decided that the Muslims were vulnerable to attack during prayer, especially while bowing and prostrating, and he decided to fall upon them at the next prayer. But Khalid was foiled, for between *Zuhr* and *'Asr*, the Prophet received a revelation that the Muslims were not to pray in a single congregation. One group of Muslims was to pray while others

stood guard, and then those who had stood guard would pray while the others kept watch. This special form of prayer was termed "*Salaah Al-Khauf*" (The Prayer in Times of Fear), for it was meant to be performed in times of danger.

The Prophet ﷺ then decided to take another route to Makkah, and they arrived at Thaniyat Al-Murar to descend at Hudaybia. At this point the Prophet's camel, Qaswa, knelt down, ignoring the repeated commands of the people around the Prophet ﷺ. They shrilled, "Qaswa won't get up, Qaswa won't get up!"

The Prophet ﷺ said calmly:

> "Qaswa has not refused, for such is not her nature. He Who restrained the Elephant is keeping her back. I swear by the One Who holds my life, that if the Quraysh propose anything to me which is in keeping with the regard due to Allâh, and ask me to show kindness, I will certainly accede to their request."

The Prophet ﷺ then chided the camel and she sprang up. He drove ahead and then halted at Hudaybia.

At Hudaybia, Budayl bin Waraqa Khuzai appeared with a band of his clansmen. They were well-wishers of the Prophet ﷺ, and brought news of the Makkans' determination to fight the Muslims and to prevent them from entering the Sacred Mosque.

The Prophet's answer was that he had come to perform pilgrimage and not to fight. However, he continued, if the Quraysh insisted on fighting, he would fight back until Allâh granted him victory or death.

Negotiations between the Prophet ﷺ and the Quraysh

Budayl bin Warqa went back and relayed the Prophet's message to the Quraysh, who then sent Mikraz bin Hafs to parley with the Prophet ﷺ. He too was told the same thing. Then came Halees bin Ikrama of Banu Kinana. When he appeared, the Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions, "This man belongs to a tribe that holds sacrificial

animals in high esteem, so make the animals stand up."

The Companions made the animals rise, and they themselves rose to greet Halees, chanting "*Labbayk*." Hearing the call to Allâh signifying that the Muslims were there to obey, praise and worship Him alone, Halees was deeply moved. He remarked, "Praise be to God! It is certainly wrong to stop these people from going to the House of God. Shall the people of Lakhm, Juzam and Hamir perform *Hajj* while the son of Abdul Muttalib is barred from the House of God? By the Lord of the *Ka'bah*, the Quraysh will meet their doom. These people have come to perform *Umrah*."

The Quraysh rebuked him for his outburst in defense of the Muslims. "Sit down! You are a simple nomad! You don't know their tricks."

They then sent Urwa bin Mas'ood Thaqafi to talk to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ repeated what he had told Budayl. Urwa tried another way to dissuade the Prophet from entering Makkah, pointing out the precarious situation of the Prophet ﷺ: "Have you heard of any Arab who has harmed his own people? And if the opposite comes to pass and you are defeated, I see sitting about you scoundrels who will leave you in the lurch."

Abu Bakr ﷺ burst out furiously, "Go suck the genitals of your idol, Lat! Shall we desert our Prophet?"

Urwah remained silent since this was the same Abu Bakr who had done him numerous favors in the past. In the course of the talks Urwah would gesticulate frequently and touch the Prophet's beard, at which Mugheera bin Shu'ba would indignantly throw off Urwah's hand with the hilt of his sword: "Keep your hand away from the sacred beard of the Prophet ﷺ."

Urwah countered, "O you ingrate! Isn't it for you that I am making efforts?"

Mugheera bin Shu'ba was Urwah's nephew and had killed some people, seized their property, and then converted to Islam.

Although the Prophet ﷺ had approved of Mugheera's accepting Islam, he avoided taking anything from his property. Urwah, as Mugheera's elder, was negotiating a settlement with the relatives of the victims, and it was to these efforts that he referred.

As Urwah watched the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions interact, he was struck by the Companions' love, loyalty, and respect for the Prophet ﷺ, and he reported to the Quraysh:

> "O people! By God, I have been to the courts of kings and seen the splendor of Caesar, Chosroes and Najaashi, but by God, never have I seen any king so revered as Muhammad. I noticed that if he spat, his Companions ran to get the spittle on their hands and rubbed it on their hands and faces. If he asked for anything, they vied to comply with his order; if he performed ablution, they struggled to get the water he had used, and if he spoke, everybody listened rapt. Nobody dared even to look straight into his eyes. Their [the Muslims'] terms are reasonable. Accept them."

Even as negotiations continued, seventy or eighty boisterous youths of the Quraysh came down from Mount Tanyeem late one night and sneaked into the Muslim camp with the intention of subverting the peace talks. Every one of them was rounded up, but the Prophet ﷺ forgave their misconduct and set them free. The incident chastened the Quraysh and impelled them to seek peace. In this connection the following verse descended:

﴿وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُم بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

[الفتح: ٢٤]

> "And it is Allâh Who restrained their hands from you and your hands from them in the midst of Makkah, and after that He gave you victory over them." (48:24)

Uthman's mission and the pledge of Ridwan

Three emissaries had come and gone, questioning the Muslims' motives. How was the Prophet ﷺ to convince the Quraysh that his

only reason for wanting to enter Makkah was spiritual? He decided to send his own emissary, Uthman bin Affan, to state that he had come only to perform *Umrah*. Uthman was to invite the Quraysh to Islam and to cheer the believing men and women still in Makkah with the tidings that Allâh was about to make their religion victorious. The time was at hand when they would no longer be required to conceal their faith.

Uthman ﷺ entered Makkah under the protection of Abban bin Sayeed Umwi and conveyed the message. The Quraysh offered him the opportunity to circumambulate the *Ka'bah*, but he refused to do so while the Prophet ﷺ himself was prevented from performing this act of worship.

The Quraysh decided to keep Uthman ﷺ with them for a while, perhaps to send him back after they had something concrete to offer the Muslims. But with the delay rumors spread that he had been slain. Since the assassination of a messenger is a declaration of war, the Prophet ﷺ had to prepare for war.

Standing under a tree, the Prophet ﷺ exhorted his followers to take an oath. They came up swearing to remain on the battlefield and to fight unto death. Placing one hand on the other, the Prophet ﷺ said, "This is the pledge on behalf of Uthman." Just then, Uthman ﷺ himself came up, and the believers were spared from going into battle, but they had proved their sincerity with their pledge. Allâh revealed a verse referring to the sanctity of the covenant:

﴿ لَّقَدْ رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ ٱلشَّجَرَةِ ﴾ [الفتح: ١٨]

> "Allâh was pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto you beneath the tree." (48:18)

And from that day on, the pledge under the tree came to be called "*Bay'a Al-Ridwan*," or the pledge of those who had earned Allâh's pleasure.

A treaty is concluded

When the Quraysh came to know of this oath of allegiance, they

decided not to court war and sent Suhayl bin Amr to make peace. At the end of the prolonged talks, the following conditions were agreed upon:

Firstly, the Prophet ﷺ would go back that year with the Muslims without making *Umrah*. He was to come to Makkah the next year, stay for three days, and he and his followers were not to carry any weapons except swords in their sheaths.

Secondly, a truce was to be in effect for ten years. Also, whoever wished to enter a bond with the Prophet ﷺ would be permitted to do so and, likewise, anybody could come to a similar agreement with the Quraysh.

Lastly, anyone from the Quraysh who escaped to Madinah had to be returned to Makkah, but the Quraysh were not required to extradite any of the Prophet's followers who returned to Makkah.

The Prophet ﷺ then sent for Ali ﷺ and bade him write: In the name of Allâh, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Suhayl protested, "I do not recognize the Most Gracious you name."

The Prophet ﷺ then asked Ali to write: In Your name, O Allâh. He then dictated to Ali, "This is what the Prophet Muhammad has decided."

Once again Suhayl objected, "If we believed that you were God's messenger, we would not have turned you away from the House of God, nor fought with you."

"I am Allâh's Messenger even if you disbelieve me," replied the Prophet ﷺ. He asked Ali to erase what he had written earlier and write "Muhammad bin Abdullah" in place of "the Prophet Muhammad."

"By Allâh, I cannot do it," replied Ali ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ, however, asked Ali to point out the words to be rubbed out. Ali pointed them out and the Prophet ﷺ expunged them. Thereafter two copies of the document were written—one for the Quraysh

and another for the Muslims.

The peace treaty was still in the process of being drafted when Abu Jandal, the Muslim son of Suhayl bin Amr, came on the scene, struggling in fetters, for his father had demanded he be returned to Makkah. The Prophet ﷺ protested, "But the treaty is still being drafted. It has not been finalized."

Suhayl said, "If it is so, then I am not prepared to make any agreement with you."

The Prophet said again, "Leave him for my sake." But Suhayl arrogantly said, "I will not leave him even for your sake," and beat his son mercilessly. Abu Jandal cried out, "Muslims! Shall I be sent back to the pagans so that I am put to trial regarding my faith once again?"

The Prophet ﷺ said to him, "Be patient and take your extradition as a source of immense reward. Allâh will bestow His blessings on you and on other oppressed Muslims."

Umar bin Khattab was so incensed at the proceedings that he urged Abu Jandal to kill his father, but Abu Jandal held himself back and submitted to the terms of the treaty.

The Muslims' dejection over the truce

After the peace treaty was finalized, the Prophet said to his Companions, "Get up and slaughter your animals." None of them got up. The Prophet ﷺ repeated his call thrice, but his words went unheeded. He then went to Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها and described to her the state of affairs. She advised the Prophet to sacrifice his animal and get his head shaved without talking to anybody. The Prophet ﷺ did so. Moreover, in order to enrage the polytheists, the Prophet ﷺ also slaughtered a camel of Abu Jahl that had a silver ring in its nostril. This made the Companions take note, and they sacrificed their animals and shaved their heads. Cows and camels were also sacrificed on behalf of seven people. The Muslims were apathetic and depressed about the treaty, which

to them was weighted heavily in favor of the Quraysh. However, their reverence for the Prophet kept them silent.

Their depression stemmed from two main reasons. They had marched out of Madinah with the intention of performing *Umrah*, and here they were returning without even having entered Makkah. Then there was the matter of the clause which compelled them to return anyone coming over to them from the Quraysh, while the Quraysh were not bound to return any Muslim who had crossed over to their side. Poor Abu Jandal was being dragged back to Makkah against his will simply because his polytheistic father wanted him back.

The Prophet ﷺ tried to console them saying that they would perform *Umrah* the next year in fulfillment of his dream.

As for the second clause, he satisfied his men by saying that any Muslim who went to the Quraysh was being sent by Allâh to live and preach there, while anyone from the Quraysh who came to them had come for shelter and would find it. He was right on this point since several Muslims were still in Abyssinia, outside the jurisdiction of the treaty, and any Muslim from Makkah could simply flee there.

Despite the Prophet's efforts to cast a favorable light on the situation, the treaty still seemed in favor of the Quraysh. Umar bin Khattab رضي الله عنه asked, "O Messenger of Allâh, are we not on the path of truth and they on that of untruth?"

The Prophet ﷺ assented.

Umar then asked, "Are our slain not in Paradise and theirs in Hell?"

The Prophet affirmed it was so.

"Why then should we accept unjust terms and leave when the issue has not been decided?" Umar asked, voicing what everyone wanted to say.

The Prophet replied, "O son of Khattab! As Allâh's Prophet, I

cannot disobey Him. He will help us and will not allow us to be ruined."

Still seething with resentment, Umar went to Abu Bakr ﷺ. He recounted his conversation with the Prophet ﷺ, and got the same answer from Abu Bakr, who added, "Hold on to the stirrup of the Prophet until death, for, by Allâh, he is right."

Allâh revealed the following verse concerning the treaty to strengthen the Prophet's resolve and comfort the Muslims:

﴿ إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ﴾ [الفتح: ١]

"Verily, I have granted you a manifest victory." (48:1)

Following this, the Prophet ﷺ sent for Umar and recited the verse before him. Umar remarked skeptically, "Is this a victory, O Messenger of Allâh?"

The Prophet replied, "Yes." This firm assertion of the Prophet ﷺ satisfied Umar, who went back silenced at last. Later, Umar was engulfed with guilt at having challenged the Prophet's judgment, and he tried to atone for his lapse by giving charity, fasting, praying, and freeing slaves in hopes of gaining Allâh's forgiveness.

The issue of *Muhajir* women

Shortly after the Treaty of Hudaybia, some Muslim women came to the Prophet ﷺ seeking asylum, while the pagans demanded their return. The Prophet ﷺ rejected the pagans' demand, saying that the treaty had nothing to do with the women. Allâh, on the other hand, sent down His command:

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِذَا جَآءَكُمُ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ مُهَٰجِرَٰتٍ فَٱمْتَحِنُوهُنَّ ٱللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَٰنِهِنَّ فَإِنْ عَلِمْتُمُوهُنَّ مُؤْمِنَٰتٍ فَلَا تَرْجِعُوهُنَّ إِلَى ٱلْكُفَّارِ لَا هُنَّ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحِلُّونَ لَهُنَّ وَءَاتُوهُم مَّآ أَنفَقُوا۟ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ أَن تَنكِحُوهُنَّ إِذَآ ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوا۟ بِعِصَمِ ٱلْكَوَافِرِ وَسْـَٔلُوا۟ مَآ أَنفَقْتُمْ وَلْيَسْـَٔلُوا۟ مَآ أَنفَقُوا۟ ذَٰلِكُمْ حُكْمُ ٱللَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾ [الممتحنة: ١٠]

"O you who believe! When believing women come to you as refugees, determine if they are actually believers, and Allâh knows best as to their faith. And if you are satisfied that they are Believers, do not return them to the unbelievers, for they are no longer lawful wives for unbelievers, and unbelievers are not lawful husbands for them. But reimburse their former husbands the dowry they gave to them, and there will be no sin on you if you marry these women after giving them a dowry. Likewise, do not remain married to women who do not believe, and ask them to return the dowry you gave them. Let them also ask for what they spent while married to you. This is Allâh's decision: He judges between you, and Allâh is All-Knowing, All-Wise." (60:10)

Thus, believing women were declared unlawful for unbelievers and unbelieving women unlawful for believing men. From then on, the Prophet ﷺ put the emigrant women to the test in the light of the following verse:

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَآءَكَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَىٰٓ أَن لَّا يُشْرِكْنَ بِٱللَّهِ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَٰدَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَٰنٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُۥ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِينَكَ فِى مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَٱسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ ٱللَّهَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾ [الممتحنة: ١٢]

"O Prophet, when believing women come to you to pledge their allegiance to you, swearing that they will not worship anything other than Allâh, steal, commit adultery or fornication, kill their children, intentionally slander anyone or lie, nor disobey you in any just matter, then accept their pledge, and pray to Allâh to forgive them. Allâh is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful." (60:12)

Once the women agreed on oath to live by these divine injunctions, the Prophet ﷺ would accept their pledge of allegiance. He solemnized the pledges verbally without shaking hands with them. Such women were then not returned to the unbelievers. Moreover, the Muslims divorced their unbelieving wives, and

Muslim women were separated from their non-Muslim husbands.

The Muslims in Makkah are freed

The clan of Banu Khuzaa sided with the Prophet ﷺ in the wake of the recent treaty and ultimately joined hands with the Muslims. They had been allies of the Banu Hashim (the Prophet's clan) even during the Age of Ignorance, while the Banu Bakr, their rivals, went to the side of the Quraysh and ultimately became the cause of the conquest of Makkah.

The Muslims who had been unable to leave Makkah continued to face persecution. One of them, Abu Baseer, escaped and headed straight for Madinah. The Quraysh sent two of their men to the Prophet ﷺ to demand his return, and the Prophet handed him over. At Dhul Hulayfa, Abu Baseer killed one of his captors, while the other, who escaped, reappeared before the Prophet ﷺ saying, "My companion was killed, and I too am about to be killed." Just then Abu Baseer arrived on the scene, and when the Prophet ﷺ rebuked him, in fear of being sent back to the pagans, he fled and settled on the coast. Abu Jandal also escaped and joined Abu Baseer. Henceforth everyone who fled Makkah after embracing Islam joined Abu Baseer.

Eventually these Muslims formed a colony. With their new found strength, they began intercepting each and every trade caravan of the Quraysh en route to Syria, falling on them and seizing their goods and men.

The Quraysh were so unnerved by this new stronghold of Muslims on their doorstep that they pleaded with the Prophet ﷺ to call the band of Muslims to Madinah. The Quraysh, for their part, guaranteed that anybody going to the Muslim side would be left in peace. The Prophet ﷺ asked the Muslims to come to Madinah, which they were happy to do.

Effects of the truce

The truce that ensued with the Treaty of Hudaybia profoundly

affected the spread of Islam. Muslims were able to mix with other Arabs and invite them to Islam with such success that more people became Muslim in the following two years than had done in the previous nineteen. Even the elite among the Quraysh, Amr bin As, Khalid bin Waleed and Uthman bin Talha appeared before the Prophet ﷺ with the confession of faith on their lips, willing to give their lives, property, and power for Allâh. As they came up to the Prophet ﷺ, he remarked, "Makkah has entrusted the lobes of its heart to us."

The Prophet's letters to Monarchs and Potentates

Once he had finalized the Treaty of Hudaybia, the Prophet ﷺ was free to spread the word of Allâh farther. He sent letters to monarchs and nobles of several lands inviting them to Islam and reminding them of their responsibility to Allâh. These letters are given below in condensed form.

Letter to the king of Abyssinia

To As-huma bin Abjar, the Abyssinian king, the Prophet wrote:

> "In the name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."
>
> "This letter is addressed to As-huma, the Monarch of Abyssinia, from Muhammad, the Prophet of Allâh."
>
> "Peace of Allâh be upon those who follow Guidance and have faith in Allâh and His Messenger. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allâh, the One without partners. He neither took a wife nor adopted a son, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. I call you to Islam, for I am His Messenger. Embrace Islam that you may find peace."
>
> "[Allâh says in the Qur'ân:] O people of the Book: Come to that which is common between you and us, that we may serve none but Allâh, nor associate anything with Him, nor

take others for lords besides Allâh. But if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims."

"If you reject this, then on you shall rest the sin of your people."

This letter was sent through Amr bin Umayya Damri. As-huma received the letter and kissed it with his eyes. He then rose from his throne to embrace Islam under the tutelage of Ja'far bin Abi Talib. In his reply to the Prophet ﷺ, As-huma pledged allegiance and confessed his faith. Later he finalized the marriage of Umm Habeebah bint Abi Sufyan رضى الله عنها to the Prophet ﷺ, and paid four hundred dinars in dower on the Prophet's behalf. He then sent Umm Habeebah back along with the emigrants of Abyssinia in two boats under the escort of Amr bin Umayya Damri. The Muslims from Abyssinia arrived in Madinah while the Prophet ﷺ was away in Khaybar.

King As-huma passed away in Rajab, 9 A.H. The Prophet ﷺ announced the news of his death the same day, and performed his funeral prayer in absentia. The Prophet ﷺ wrote to his successor calling him to Islam, but it was not known whether he accepted Islam.

Letter to Muqauqis, king of Alexandria and Egypt

The Prophet's letter to Muqauqis went thus:

"In the name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

"From Muhammad, the servant and Messenger of Allâh, to Muqauqis, the ruler of the Copts."

"Blessed are those who follow Guidance. I call you to Islam. Embrace Islam that you may find peace. Accept Islam, and Allâh will reward you twofold. If you reject Allâh's word, then on you shall rest the sin of the Copts as well."

"[Allâh says in the Qur'ân:] O people of the Book! Come

to that which is common between you and us, that we may serve none but Allâh, nor associate anything with Him, nor take others for lords besides Allâh. But if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims."

The Prophet ﷺ sent this letter through Hateeb bin Abi Baltah, who held a discussion with Muqauqis, and won his esteem. Muqauqis then put the letter in an ivory case, placed his seal on it and preserved it. He wrote back to the Prophet ﷺ saying he believed a prophet was to appear, but he thought that he would come from Syria. Although he did not embrace Islam, he presented to the Prophet ﷺ two maidens named Maria and Sireen, who were of high status among the Copts. He also sent some cloth and a donkey. The Prophet ﷺ chose Mariya (who was later to become the mother of his son, Ibraheem) and Duldul the donkey for himself. He gave Sireen to Hassan bin Thabit رضي الله عنه.

Letter to Chosroes (Khusro Pervez), the king of Persia

The Prophet ﷺ addressed this letter to the king of Persia:

"In the name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

"From the Prophet Muhammad, to Chosroes, ruler of Persia."

"Blessed are those who follow Guidance and put faith in Allâh and His Messenger. I bear witness that none is worthy of worship except Allâh. He is One and has no partner, and Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. I call you to Allâh, as I am a Prophet sent to all mankind to warn those alive and to establish the truth in the eyes of the unbelievers. Accept Islam and you will be secure. In case you reject it, you shall bear the sin of all the Magi."

This letter was sent through Abdullah bin Hudhayfah Sahmi to the ruler of Bahrain, who was to deliver it to Chosroes. When the letter was read out to Chosroes, he ripped it up saying, "A

wretched slave among my subjects dares write his name before mine!"

When the Prophet ﷺ heard how Chosroes had torn up his epistle, he said, "Even so shall Allâh destroy his kingdom." His words rang true, for shortly thereafter the Persian forces tasted ignominious defeat at the hands of the Romans. Following this, Chosroes' son, Shervah, rose up in revolt, assassinated him and seized the throne. Persia was racked by dissension and conflict until the Muslim conquest during the Caliphate of Umar bin Khattab ؓ.

Letter to the Roman Emperor

The Prophet ﷺ wrote to him:

> "In the name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."
>
> "From Muhammad, the servant and Messenger of Allâh, to Heraclius, the great king of Rome."
>
> "Blessed are those who follow Guidance. Embrace Islam that you may find peace. Allâh will reward you twofold. If you reject His message, then on you shall rest the sin of your subjects and followers."
>
> "[Allâh says in the Qur'ân:] O people of the Book: Come to that which is common between you and us, that we may serve none but Allâh, nor associate anything with Him, nor take others for lords besides Allâh. But if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims."

Dihya bin Khalifa Kalbi, who was assigned to deliver the letter, gave it to the ruler of Basra, who forwarded it to the Roman emperor. Heraclius had come walking to Jerusalem from Hims in Syria. His pilgrimage was an offering of thanks to God for the Roman victory over the Persians. Upon receipt of the Prophet's letter, he rushed a courier to bring forward any man familiar with

the Prophet ﷺ. A caravan of the Quraysh headed by Abu Sufyan was in the area and was summoned before Heraclius and his courtiers. Heraclius inquired, "Who is closest to Muhammad in terms of lineage?"

"Abu Sufyan," the people revealed.

Heraclius called Abu Sufyan closer and seated the others behind him. He then announced to the Quraysh, "I shall ask him [Abu Sufyan] about him [the Prophet]. If he tells a lie, you should refute it." Abu Sufyan thus felt obliged to tell the truth. The conversation between Heraclius and Abu Sufyan ran thus:

Heraclius: Tell me about his lineage.

Abu Sufyan: He comes of the best lineage.

Heraclius: Did anybody before him make the claim he does?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Have there been any kings in his family?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Who are his followers? Are they the poor and the weak, or are they nobles?

Abu Sufyan: They are all poor and weak.

Heraclius: Are his followers increasing or dwindling?

Abu Sufyan: Their numbers are growing.

Heraclius: Do those who enter his religion despise and leave him?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Did you catch him lying before he claimed to be a prophet?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heraclius: Has he ever broken his word?

Abu Sufyan: Not yet. We are at present at peace with him. We don't know what he will do in the future.

Heraclius: Have you ever fought against him?

Abu Sufyan: Yes

Heraclius: What was the result?

Abu Sufyan: Fortunes have varied, sometimes in our favor, sometimes in his.

Heraclius: What is it that he teaches?

Abu Sufyan: He asks us to worship one God, and not to associate anything with Him, and to renounce whatever our ancestors worshipped. He asks us to offer prayers, to be truthful and pious, and to be kind to kinsmen.

Heraclius then summarized all he had heard:

> You said that he is of noble lineage. Prophets always come from the best lineage. You said that none of you made such a claim before him. If it were so, I would say that he was imitating a claim already made by someone.
>
> You said that none among his ancestors happened to be a king. Had anyone among his ancestors been a king, I would have surmised that he was trying to recover his lost kingdom. I asked if you knew him to be untruthful before he claimed to be a prophet, and you said, "No." I know that it is not possible for a man to be truthful to people but to mince the truth in regard to God. You told me that the poor and the weak followed him. It is true that prophets are always followed by the humble and the poor in the beginning. You said that they were gaining in numbers. Faith is always like that, for it goes on increasing until it triumphs. You told me that none had ever turned away from him and rejected his faith. It is a fact that faith once settled in the heart never leaves it.

> You told me that he never broke his word. Prophets never break their promises. You said that he asked you to worship one God, not to associate anything with Him, bade you to turn away from the idols and to offer prayer, practice truth, piety and chastity.
>
> If what you have said is true, very soon he will conquer the ground that is beneath my feet. I knew that a prophet was about to appear, but I never thought that he would come from you. If it had been possible, I would have called upon him, and if I had been with him, I would have washed his feet.

Heraclius asked for the letter again and he read it out. The assembly erupted in surprise and alarm at the Prophet's message. Heraclius dismissed Abu Sufyan and his men to bring the situation under control. Outside, Abu Sufyan said to his men with foreboding, "The affair of Abu Kabsha has grown so powerful that even the king of Banu Asfar [the Romans] fears him." Each day Abu Sufyan grew convinced that Islam would prevail, until Allâh favored him with Islam.

Heraclius was so impressed with what he had heard that he presented Dihya bin Khalifah (the bearer of the letter) with money and expensive robes. Heraclius then went back to Hims, where he summoned his chiefs and courtiers in a closed assembly and addressed them, "O Romans, if you desire safety and guidance so that your kingdom shall be firmly established, follow this prophet." The gathering took flight like wild asses but found the doors closed.

When Heraclius saw his nobles' opposition to the message of Islam, he called them back and added, "What I just said was to test your constancy and faith. I am now satisfied of your firmness and devotion." The courtiers lowered their heads, pleased at his words.

These details make it clear that by then Heraclius had seen the

truth of the Prophet's message, but his love for his throne overpowered him, and he failed to embrace Islam. In Allâh's sight, Heraclius stands guilty on his own account and because of his people who remained misguided.

At the end of his mission, Dihya bin Khalifa returned to Madinah via Husma, where Banu Jazam ambushed him, seizing all his possessions. He escaped to Madinah and reported the incident to the Prophet ﷺ.

The Prophet ﷺ dispatched Zayd bin Haritha ؓ at the head of five hundred men. Zayd launched a sniper attack on the bandits, killing them in large numbers and capturing a hundred women and children. A thousand camels and five hundred goats were seized as booty. Zayd bin Rifa'a Zajami, a chieftain of the Jazam tribe, hurried to Madinah. Since he and some people of his tribe had already embraced Islam, and he had helped Dihya when he was under attack by the bandits, the Prophet ﷺ returned the booty and the prisoners.

Letter to Harith bin Abu Shammar Ghassani

The Prophet ﷺ next sent a missive with Shuja' bin Wahb Asadi to Damascus, where Heraclius' viceroy, Harith bin Abu Shammar Ghassani, was ruler. Harith responded to the letter with wrath. He flung it saying, "Who has the temerity to conquer my land?" He prepared to wage war on the Muslims and told Shuja' to notify the Prophet of an impending war. When Harith asked his overlord, Heraclius, for permission to fight the Prophet ﷺ, permission was denied. Retreating from his belligerent position, Harith presented clothes and riches to Shuja' bin Wahb and saw him off graciously.

Letter to the Amir of Basra is intercepted

Next, the Prophet ﷺ wrote to the ruler of Basra and invited him to Islam. When his envoy, Harith bin Umayr Azdi ؓ, arrived at Muta in southern Jordan, he was beheaded by Sharahbeel bin

Amr Ghassani. Harith was the only emissary of the Prophet to lose his life in carrying out his mission. The Prophet ﷺ was grief stricken at Harith's execution and found the act so reprehensible that he later waged war against Sharahbeel. That expedition was to be known as the Battle of Muta.

Letter to Haudha Bin Ali, chief of Yamamah

The Prophet ﷺ addressed him the following letter:

> In the name of Allâh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.
>
> From the Prophet Muhammad, to Haudha bin Ali.
>
> "Blessed are they who follow Guidance. Be it known to you that my religion will hold sway over whatever area camels and horses can ever cover. Embrace Islam that you may find peace. I shall keep intact what lies in your possession."

This letter was sent through Sulayt bin Amr Aamiri. Haudha received him with respect and gave him gifts. He also wrote in reply:

> What shall I say in praise of that to which you call me? I am the poet and orator of my people, and my prestige encompasses the whole of Arabia. Entrust to me a part of your dominion and I shall serve you.

When the Prophet ﷺ received the letter, he remarked, "I shall not give him even a piece of land if he asks for it. He will himself meet his doom along with his possessions." Haudha died shortly afterwards while the Prophet ﷺ was still engaged in the conquest of Makkah.

Letter to the ruler of Bahrain

The Prophet sent Alaa' bin Al-Hadrami with a letter inviting Mundhir to Islam. Mundhir accepted the call to Islam, and so did some of his subjects. Others, however, continued to follow Judaism, while some practiced Zoroastrianism. Conscious of the

Prophet's status as spiritual and temporal head of the Muslim world, Mundhir asked the Prophet ﷺ how to deal with the non-Muslims in his realm. The Prophet ﷺ wrote back instructing him to leave the Muslims as they were and to collect the *Jiziyah* tax from the Jews and the Zoroastrians. He allowed Mundhir to continue ruling as long as he stayed on the path of righteousness.

Letter to the rulers of Oman

It was only after the conquest of Makkah that the Prophet ﷺ sent Amr bin Aas ؓ to the joint rulers of Oman, the two brothers, Abd and Jayfar. All his previous letters to rulers, near and far, had been sent immediately after the Treaty of Hudaybia. In this letter, the Prophet ﷺ informed the two brothers of his mission to acquaint men with the truth of Islam and the dangers of disbelief. He warned them that if they rejected Islam, they would pay in this world and the next, for Islam would prevail.

Abd was the first one to meet with Amr, and they talked at great length.

"What is your message?" Abd asked.

"We call people to Allâh, Who is One, Peerless, and we ask them to abandon all other deities and to bear witness that Muhammad is the servant and Messenger of Allâh," Amr explained.

Abd posed another question, "What does your prophet enjoin?"

Amr replied, "He commands us to obey Allâh and forbids us to disobey Him. He ordains good deeds, kindness to kith and kin, and prohibits excesses, adultery, liquor and the worship of stones, idols and the crucifix."

Abd confided, "What a good thing he calls us towards! Had my brother also supported me, we would have set out to pledge fealty to Muhammad and to testify as to his prophethood. Unfortunately, my brother is fond of his kingship than of obeying another."

Amr said: "If your brother accepts Islam, then the Prophet ﷺ will keep his kingdom intact. However, he will take some wealth by way of collecting charity from the rich and distribute it to the poor and needy."

Abd commented, "That is very nice." Then he asked, "What is charity?"

Amr explained the concept to him in detail. However, when Amr referred to the possession of livestock being subject to *Zakaah*, or wealth tax, Amr said doubtfully, "I don't know whether my people will accept that."

Abd then took Amr bin As to his brother, Jayfar, who was also given the letter. Jayfar asked Amr as to what the Quraysh had done.

"They all accepted Islam, and if you embrace Islam, you will be safe, or else our cavalry will trample your land and wipe out its greenery."

Jayfar asked for a day's reprieve, and on the following day he made a show of his military power. Nevertheless, he consulted with his brother in private, and the next day both the brothers accepted Islam, and left Amr free to collect charity. They helped him against those who opposed the collection.

Expedition of Ghaba or Dhu Qarad

During the ten years of peace that ensued with the Treaty of Hudaybia, the Prophet ﷺ was freed of the constant hostility of the Quraysh. However, his other source of worry, the Jewish tribes, continued to plague him and the Muslims. They had reneged on agreements and incited other tribes to form a confederacy against the Muslims. All of Khaybar and the area north of it formed their territory from where they launched campaigns against the Muslims. Three days before the Prophet ﷺ was about to lead an expedition to Khaybar, a small clash called the Battle of Ghaba took place. It was in the month of Muharram, 7 A.H.

The Prophet ﷺ had sent his camels to graze in Ghaba, near Uhud. With the herd were the Prophet's slave, Rabah, a herdsman, and Salamah bin Akwa, who was riding Abu Talha's horse.

Suddenly, Abdul Rahman bin Uyaynah Fazari and his men swooped down, and after killing the herdsman, they rode away with all the camels. Salamah left his horse with Rabah and climbed a hill. Facing Madinah, he sounded the alarm. Three times he called, "*Ya Sabaha*!" Then he went after the thieves launching arrows at them. Undaunted at being alone, he sang a martial song:

"Take this. I am the son of Akwa, and today is the day of a suckling."

Salamah was very effective in harassing the thieves and he killed several of them. If a horseman turned back to give chase, Salamah would shoot at him from a tree. If they entered a hilly pass, he would scale the hill and set off a rock slide. In desperation, the thieves set all the camels free, but Salamah continued to shoot at them. Then the thieves tried to lighten their mounts by throwing away thirty sheets and thirty lances. Salamah would cover them with a pile of stones so that they might be easily located, and he would go on after the horsemen.

After one such incident, the thieves sat down at a narrow turning of a mountain pass while Salamah sat on the peak. Four of them spotted him and moved towards him. Salamah said to them, "Do you know who I am? I am Salamah bin Akwa. I can easily catch anybody running among you, but none of you can catch me." The men went back.

Shortly afterwards, Salamah noticed the cavalrymen of the Prophet ﷺ riding out from between the trees. The first to come in sight was Akhram, followed by Qatadah and Miqdad. Akhram and Abdul Rahman met in combat. Although Akhram managed to wound Abdul Rahman's horse, he himself was killed by Abdul Rahman, who then took his horse. Qatadah rode up and killed

Abdul Rahman with his lance. Seeing their leader fall, the rest of the bandits took off with the Muslim cavalrymen in pursuit and Salamah still chasing them on foot.

Shortly before sunset, the thieves reached the mountain pass of Dhu Qarad. They were thirsty and exhausted, but Salamah's arrows would not let them get near the water. The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions on horseback met up with Salamah after sunset. Salamah submitted, "O Messenger of Allâh! They are all thirsty, and if you give me a hundred men I will catch them by the scruff of their necks and bring them to you."

The Prophet said, "O son of Akwa, now that you have the upper hand, show your enemies a little politeness. After all, now they are in the territory of their hosts, Banu Ghatfan."

For his extraordinary feats that day, Salamah received two portions of the booty from the Prophet ﷺ —one as a foot soldier and another as a cavalryman. He had the honor of sitting behind the Prophet ﷺ himself on the camel Azba'a, and of hearing the Prophet declare, "The best cavalry man among us today is Abu Qatadah, and the best foot soldier is Salamah."

Conquest of Khaybar

In Muharram of 7 A.H., the Prophet ﷺ announced the march to Khaybar. Those who had failed to join the expedition to Hudaybia asked to go along, but the Prophet ﷺ announced that only those who had already proved their resolve for *Jihad* were to go. The laggards were to be left out of the expedition and the spoils. And so it was that the fourteen hundred Companions who had taken the pledge under the tree near Hudaybia marched out.

Leaving Madinah in the care of Saba bin Arfatah Ghafari, the Prophet ﷺ set out along a well-known caravan route. Halfway down, he diverted his troops to another route that led to Khaybar so as to block the Jews' escape to Syria.

The last night of the march saw the Prophet ﷺ and his troops

camp close to Khaybar while the Jews remained oblivious of their presence. The Prophet led the *Fajr* prayer in darkness, and then he mounted his animal to resume the journey to Khaybar. The Jews, meanwhile, carrying spades and baskets, began setting out for their fields. When they saw the Muslims, they rushed back shouting, "By God, Muhammad has appeared with his troops." The Prophet ﷺ remarked to his men, "*Allâhu Akbar*! Khaybar has met its doom. When we appear on the plains of a people, the morning turns gloomy for them."

The population of Khaybar, which lay 171 km north of Madinah, was spread along three main settlements, Nataah, Katibah and Shaq. Nataah had three citadels, Hisn Na'am, Hisn Sa'b bin Mu'adh, and Hisn Qal'a Al-Zubayr.

The two citadels in Shaq were Hisn Abi and Hisn Nizar, while Katibah had three castles, namely Hisn Qamus, Hisn Wateeh and Hisn Salalam. There were a number of other citadels and castles in Khaybar, but they were smaller and not as well-fortified as those mentioned above.

The Prophet ﷺ pitched his tents east of the citadels of Nataah, out of shooting range. He then charged at Hisn Na'am. This stronghold of the Jews was well-protected, high and virtually impregnable. It was their first line of defense and the home of their legendary champion, Marhab, who was reputed to have the strength of a thousand men. A few days went by with both sides trading arrows. Then the Prophet ﷺ gave his men news of victory. He announced, "Tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who loves Allâh and His Prophet, and who is in turn loved by Allâh and His Prophet."

The Muslims spent the night in anticipation, each man yearning to be chosen as standard bearer. At daybreak the Prophet ﷺ inquired, "Where is Ali?" The Companions replied, "He has an eye infection." Ali رضي الله عنه was brought before the Prophet ﷺ, who applied his spittle to Ali's eyes and prayed for his recovery. Ali

found his eyes were cured instantly, and he was then given the Muslim standard. The Prophet instructed him to invite the enemy to Islam. Only if they rejected the call to faith was Ali to fight.

In preparation for war, the Jews sent their women and children off to the citadel of Shaq. They had decided on open combat the same morning. Consequently, when Ali got there, he found them ready for battle. Nevertheless in compliance with the Prophet's instructions, he called on them to accept Islam. In response, Marhab came out brandishing his sword, bragging about his strength:

"All Khaybar knows I am Marhab, armed to the teeth, valiant and experienced when war is aflame."

Amir bin Akwa countered: "All Khaybar knows I am Amir, a gallant warrior, up in arms."

Following this exchange, they charged at one another. Marhab's scimitar was lodged in Amir's shield, and Amir made to strike at Marhab's calf. Since his sword was small it fell short, and hit his knee, an injury that proved fatal. The Prophet ﷺ said in tribute to Amir, "He enjoys a twofold reward. He was a brave warrior, and very few like him will ever tread the soil of Arabia."

When Amir fell at the lance of Marhab, Ali sprang up to face Marhab with the following couplet on his lips:

> I am he whose mother named him Hayder [the lion], fierce like the lions of the forest. With my lance, I will repay in full measure every ounce of insult.

With one blow of his sword, Ali slew Marhab. Marhab's brother issued a challenge that was met by Zubayr, who swiftly sent his opponent to the same fate as Marhab. General combat ensued, and in the course of heavy fighting, several Jewish chieftains fell, dismaying their men who then fled in consternation. The Muslim soldiers gave chase and stormed the citadel. The Jews then fled to an adjacent citadel called Hisn Sa'b, and set up fortifications.

From Hisn Na'am, the Muslim troops captured weapons, dates, and grain.

Following the capture of Hisn Na'am, the Muslim forces under Hubab bin Mundhir laid a three day siege to Hisn Sa'b. On the third day, the Prophet ﷺ prayed for victory and a substantial booty. He then ordered the Muslims to attack, and before sunset, the citadel fell. Since it had served as the Jews' single most important granary, the citadel yielded the virtually starving Muslims enormous quantities of food and fat. To satisfy their hunger, they slaughtered several donkeys, but the Prophet ﷺ forbade his men to eat the meat. At his orders, all the pots containing the meat were overturned.

Now the Jews, having lost two of their forts, took shelter in the third citadel at Nataah called Al-Zubayr and fortified it. The Muslim forces besieged that too. On the fourth day of the siege, a Jew constructed a number of drains to get drinking water through them.

The Muslims lost no time in cutting off the water supply. Finding no alternative but to fight, the Jews rushed out of the citadel and fell upon the waiting Muslims. They fought fiercely, but lost the day and were driven towards Hisn Abi.

With one settlement vanquished, the Muslims moved on to Shaq to besiege the fortress of Hisn Abi. Two of the Jews came out consecutively to engage in single combat. When the second one fell at the sword of Abu Dujana, the others rushed back into their citadel followed by the Muslim troops, who drove them out and captured a large amount of grain and several heads of livestock.

The Muslim soldiers continued their march on and laid siege to Hisn Nizar, where the Jews had fled. High on a mountain peak, virtually inaccessible, it seemed the safest of all hideouts. The Jewish men had therefore left their women and children there while they kept up a shower of stones and arrows to repel any Muslim who attempted to scale the mountain. The Muslims

responded with the use of catapults, and their strategy proved so effective that the fortress fell into their hands, and the Jews made for Katibah. When the Muslims entered the fallen fortress, they found it full of valuable copper and clay utensils, which they washed and subsequently used.

Relentlessly, the Muslims marched on to Katibah, the last remaining Jewish stronghold. Its three citadels were their target. After a two to three-week siege, the first one, at Qamus, fell, and when it seemed that the two remaining citadels at Wateeh and Salalam were about to be attacked by the Muslims, the Jews negotiated for peace. They agreed to go into exile with their families if they were guaranteed safe conduct. The Prophet ﷺ acceded to their request. He also allowed them to carry whatever they could along with loads of gold, silver, horses and weaponry. However, if they hid anything, the agreement would be nullified.

The Jews handed over two or three citadels to the Muslims, who also got a hundred coats of mail, four hundred swords, a thousand lances and five hundred Arabian bows. Moreover, they found some Hebrew scriptures that they returned at the request of the Jews.

The surrender was not completely unanimous. Some of the Jewish chiefs such as Kinana bin Abul-Huqayq and his brother contravened the terms that had been agreed upon and attempted to slip past with a huge hoard of gold, silver and other jewelry. They thus lost the guarantee of safe passage and were killed for breach of promise. Among the prisoners was Kinana's widow, Safiyah bint Huayy bin Akhtab, who was to later become one of the Mothers of the Faithful with her marriage to the Prophet ﷺ.

Thus ended a long campaign. As we have seen, there was a series of battles for Khaybar, instead of a single event. At the close of hostilities, between fifteen and eighteen Muslims were martyred, while the number of Jews killed stood at ninety-three.

The emigrants of Abyssinia return

At the end of the Battle of Khaybar, Amr bin Umayya Damri, the envoy of the Prophet ﷺ to the king of Abyssinia, returned with the Muslim emigrants. A band of them marched towards Khaybar, hoping to join in the war, while the rest of the returning exiles went to Madinah. Among those who headed for the battlefield were Ja'far bin Abi Talib and Abu Musa Ash'ari رضي الله عنهما. By the time they got to Khaybar, it had already been conquered, but the spoils of war were yet to be distributed. The Prophet ﷺ kissed Ja'far's forehead in welcome and said, "By Allâh, I do not know which pleases me more—the conquest of Khaybar or the arrival of Ja'far." Along with those who had actually fought in the battles, Ja'far received a share of the booty for attempting to participate in *Jihad*.

Abu Hurayrah, who along with 'Aishah is one of the main narrators of *Hadeeth*, was also among those who presented himself to the Prophet ﷺ after the conquest. He had accepted the faith when he arrived in Madinah, while the Prophet was away leading the campaign at Khaybar. After obtaining permission from the authorities in Madinah, he left for Khaybar to enlist in the Muslim army, but arrived after the war.

Abban bin Sa'eed also came to the Prophet ﷺ following the conquest of Khaybar. He had been away leading a reconnaissance mission to Najd. The Prophet ﷺ, however, did not give him and his men a share of the booty from Khaybar.

Division of Khaybar

Although the terms of the surrender called for exile, which had been conceded in place of death, many of the Jews were reluctant to leave Khaybar. After obtaining immunity, they submitted a new proposal before the Prophet ﷺ. They implored, "O Muhammad, let us stay to till this land, for we know more about it than you do. We will farm the land for payment of half of its fruit and grain."

The Prophet ﷺ granted their request, and subsequently the Jews

lived in peace and security as wards of the Muslim state. However, during the caliphate of Umar ﷺ, they resumed their subversive acts and were eventually exiled.

As for the territory of Khaybar, the Prophet ﷺ divided it into thirty-six parts, each part consisting of a hundred shares. Half of it was allocated to meet the needs of the entire community, and the other half, comprising eighteen parts, was divided among the troops so that every foot soldier received one share for every three a cavalry soldier got. The 200 cavalry men thus shared in six parts, while the 1200 foot soldiers divided twelve parts among themselves.

Khaybar was a fertile area, replete with dates and grain, and its conquest brought prosperity for the Muslims. Aishah ﷺ relates that when Khaybar was conquered she rejoiced, "Now we shall get dates to the fill." Upon returning from Khaybar, the poor *Muhajireen*, who had finally attained economic self-sufficiency, returned the date trees given to them by the *Ansar* to eke out their living.

The Prophet ﷺ is poisoned

Now that peace prevailed and the threats of death and exile had receded, the Jews launched a different kind of warfare. They conspired to kill the Prophet ﷺ. Through the wife of Sallam bin Mishkam, they presented a roasted goat to the Prophet ﷺ. Knowing that the Prophet ﷺ relished the shoulder, she peppered that portion liberally with poison. One morsel was enough to warn the Prophet ﷺ, who quickly spat it out saying, "This is poisoned."

Upon being summoned by the Prophet ﷺ, who wished to ascertain the facts, the Jews and the woman confessed their crime and said, "We thought that if you were a pretender, we would get rid of you, but if you were truly a prophet, the poison would be ineffective." At that the Prophet ﷺ forgave them, but when Bishr bin Bara bin Marur ﷺ died from eating the meat, the woman was

killed as retribution.

Surrender of the people of Fadak

Once the Prophet ﷺ arrived at Khaybar, he sent Mahisa bin Mas'ood eastward to the township of Fadak. It was about a two-day journey from Khaybar and is now known as Hayet in the Hail region of modern Saudi Arabia. The Jews there were also called on to accept Islam, but they deferred their reply, waiting to see which way the battle for Khaybar went. The conquest of Khaybar propelled them into starting negotiations, and they petitioned the Prophet ﷺ to grant them the same terms as the people of Khaybar. The Prophet ﷺ accepted. The land of Fadak was allotted to the Prophet ﷺ. From its income, he would spend on himself and Banu Hashim, his clansmen. He also used the money for charitable purposes, such as financing the marriages of needy young men.

Wadi Al-Qura

After Khaybar had been subjugated, the Prophet ﷺ went to Wadi Al-Qura and invited the Jews there to accept Islam. Rather than accept or enter a pact, they took the military option. The first of their champions came out and was slain by Zubayr. The second one who came out met the same fate. Ali slew the third. In this way, the Jews lost eleven men. At the death of each, the Prophet ﷺ would repeat his call to Islam, and at every prayer he would do the same. The day ended thus. The following morning he appeared again, but before the sun climbed any higher the Jews were routed, with a sizable amount of land falling into Muslim hands.

It was time to sue for peace, and the Jews asked to be given the same status as the people of Khaybar. Their request was granted, and yet another area came under Muslim protection.

Reconciliation with the people of Taymaa

The Jews of Taymaa, keeping in mind the defeat of their co-

religionists at Khaybar, Fadak and Wadi Al-Qura, also agreed to cease hostilities and pay *Jiziyah* in return for protection by the Muslim army.

The Prophet ﷺ marries Safiyah رضي الله عنها

Once Khaybar and Wadi Al-Qura were conquered and the inhabitants of Fadak and Taima had surrendered, the Prophet ﷺ began the journey back to Madinah. It was during this journey, passing through the valley of Sahba, that he consummated his marriage to Safiyah bint Huayy bin Akhtab. When she was taken prisoner after her husband's death, the Prophet ﷺ gave her to Dihya bin Khalifa Kalbi, but the other Companions suggested that as widow of a chieftain Safiyah was more suitable for the Prophet ﷺ. She accepted Islam at the Prophet's invitation and thus won her freedom. Soon after she became the Prophet's wife.

The morning after the marriage was consummated, the Prophet hosted a "*Waleemah*," the feast every Muslim bridegroom hosts even now in keeping with the Prophet's practice. The meal consisted of dates, cheese and "*Samna*." The Prophet ﷺ spent three nights with his new wife and then resumed his journey, finally arriving in Madinah around the end of Safar or the beginning of Rabi' Al-Awwal. The year was 7 A.H.

The expedition of Dhat Al-Riqa'

The Prophet ﷺ had barely subdued one set of enemies when the news came that another conglomeration was massing arms against him. The Bedouins of Banu Anmar, Tha'laba and Maharib were preparing to strike and had to be quelled.

Uthman bin Affan was given the responsibility of Madinah, and seven hundred men set out with the Prophet ﷺ. Their destination was Nakhlah, a two day journey from Madinah. There they encountered warriors from Banu Ghatfan. Both groups tried to scare off each other without actual physical combat. When the time came to pray, the Muslims prayed the special prayer termed

"*Salaah Al-Khauf.*" The Prophet ﷺ led first one group of his Companions in two *Rak'ah* of prayer and then a second group followed him for the remaining two *rak'ah*. In this way, the two groups of soldiers prayed two *Rak'ah* each while the Prophet ﷺ as *Imam* (leader of the prayer) prayed four *Rak'ah* in all.

The face off with Banu Ghatfan ended abruptly when the enemy suddenly took fright and scattered. The Prophet ﷺ then returned to Madinah after this expedition ended satisfactorily without loss of life. It came to be known as *Dhat Al-Riqa'*, in reference to the rags (*Riqa'*, in Arabic) the Muslims tied around their sore and bloody feet in the course of the long march. However, another source states that the march got its name from the terrain, which had the appearance of a patchwork of rags.

Who will save you now?

On the way back to Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ lay down to rest under a tree, his sword hanging from a branch. The rest of the people also fell asleep under the trees. Suddenly the idyll was disrupted with the arrival of a polytheist. He crept up and grabbed the Prophet's sword and asked the Prophet ﷺ menacingly, "Do you fear me?"

"Not at all," the Prophet replied, barely awake, but not at all perturbed. The polytheist asked, "Who will save you from me now?"

"Allâh," the Prophet ﷺ replied calmly. The sword fell from the stranger's hand, and the Prophet ﷺ seized it and posed the same question to him, "Who will save you from me now?"

"You have me now," the failed executioner said, pleading for mercy, and mercy was shown. Then the Prophet ﷺ asked the man to place his faith in the oneness of Allâh, but he demurred, pledging instead never to fight the Muslims nor to support others against Islam. He walked away as a free man, and to his people he said, "I come to you after meeting the best of mankind."

Umrah is finally performed

A year had gone by since the Treaty of Hudaybia, and in accordance with the pact, the Muslims were now free to set out for *Umrah*. After handing over the affairs of Madinah to Abu Rahm Ghifari, the Prophet ﷺ started out for Makkah with sixty sacrificial camels under the care of Naj'ah bin Jundub Aslami. Fearful of fresh treachery by the Quraysh, they carried weapons and one hundred horses under the care of Basheer bin Sa'd.

At Dhul Hulayfah, the party entered the state of consecration and put on *Ihraam*. The Prophet ﷺ began chanting the *Talbiyah* aloud. "*Labbayk*," he called to his Lord. "Here I am at your service, O Allâh!" he cried out, and his followers echoed his cry. The journey to the House of God was formally begun. When the pilgrims got to Hajoon, they disarmed themselves and handed their weapons to Aus bin Khuli Al-*Ansar*i who, along with two hundred men, was in charge of the weaponry. These people would stay behind to form the defense while the others performed their religious duties.

As they neared Makkah, the pilgrims took with them only sheathed swords, adhering to the agreement at Hudaybia. They entered the city at Kada'a which opened at Hajun. Mounted on his camel, Qaswa, flanked by his armed Companions, and chanting "*Labbayk*," the Prophet ﷺ rode into the city. Thus they all moved toward the *Ka'bah*. The Prophet ﷺ touched the Black Stone with a stick. Still seated on Qaswa, he circumambulated the *Ka'bah*, and the Muslims followed suit. They circled round the *Ka'bah* with their right shoulders uncovered in a display of their valor. After all, they had won the right to worship Allâh in His Sacred Mosque in full view of the pagans.

Abdullah bin Rawaha ﷺ moved ahead of the Prophet ﷺ, his sword across his shoulder as he recited the following couplets:

> Progeny of the unbelievers, step aside and make room.
> Make room, for all virtues lie in our Prophet ﷺ. Today we

shall smite you at His command upon whose revelation we smote you before. We will smite you to dislodge your skulls and make friend oblivious of friend.

The polytheists sat on mount Qayiqa' north of the *Ka'bah*, observing the newcomers in amazement and reluctant admiration. They had heard that the pilgrims were a sickly lot, reeling under the fevers rampant in Yathrib, as they still referred to Madinah, but what they saw was different. These were not feverish, emaciated men, but proud sturdy warriors who compared with the best of their own. Thus, the Prophet's strategy succeeded. Well aware of the mentality of the Quraysh, the Prophet had instructed his Companions to run while performing circumambulation in order to show off their strength to the pagans. However, they were not to run between the Yemeni pillar and the Black Stone, for this portion lay south, out of the polytheists' range of vision.

Circumambulation being over, the Prophet ﷺ performed *Sa'i* (endeavor) between the two hillocks of Safa and Marwa. After completing seven circuits, he arrived at Marwa, slaughtered his sacrificial animal and shaved his head. The Muslims followed him. After that, the Prophet ﷺ sent some people to Yaajaj to take charge of the weaponry so that those who had been left there could now perform their *Umrah*.

For three days the Prophet ﷺ stayed in Makkah. During this period, he married Maymoona bint Al-Harith Hilalya, widow of Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib and the aunt of Ibn Abbas. When she received the Prophet's proposal, she entrusted it to Abbas, who then gave her in marriage to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet of course was out of *Ihraam* at the time, for his first act had been to complete *Umrah* and come out of the state of consecration.

On the morning of the fourth day, the Prophet ﷺ began the journey back to Madinah. His first halting place was Sarf, nine miles from Makkah. It was there that Maymoona رضى الله عنها was sent out to

him as his bride. Allâh had also decreed that Maymoona رضى الله عنها would later die at Sarf and be buried there, at the same place where she had become the bride of the Prophet ﷺ.

Back in Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ was again swamped by the affairs of state. He sent several armed missions, the most important among them being the expedition to Muta and to Dhat Al-Salasil.

The expedition to Muta

In the section on the Prophet's letters to various kings and potentates, we have mentioned that Harith bin Umayr Azdi, the Prophet's envoy to the ruler of Basra, was slain en route by Sharahbeel bin Amr Ghassani. The Prophet ﷺ took the killing as an act of war and readied a force of three thousand men under Zayd bin Haritha. He nominated Ja'far bin Abi Talib and Abdullah bin Rawaha to take charge in consecutive order in case Zayd fell in battle. The Prophet ﷺ prepared a white standard and handed it to Zayd bin Haritha. He instructed Zayd to go to the area where Harith had been martyred, and to invite the populace to Islam. The Muslims were to fight only if the people rejected the call.

As he saw the troops off, the Prophet ﷺ uttered these memorable words:

«اغْزُوا بِاسْمِ اللهِ، فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، قَاتِلُوا مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللهِ، لاَ تَغْدِرُوا، وَلاَ تَغُلُّوا، وَلاَ تَقْتُلُوا وَلِيدًا، وَلاَ امْرَأَةً، وَلاَ كَبِيرًا فَانِيًا، وَلاَ مُنْعَزِلاً بِصَوْمَعَةٍ، وَلاَ تَقْطَعُوا نَخْلاً، وَلاَ شَجَرَةً، وَلاَ تَهدِمُوا بِنَاءً».

> "In the name of Allâh and in the way of Allâh—fight against those who blaspheme Him. Behold! Commit no breach of promise, nor of trust, nor kill their children, women, old men on the verge of death, nor the recluse in the hermitage, and do not cut down date trees, nor demolish any building." (*Al-Bukhâri*)

The Prophet ﷺ escorted the troops up to Thaniyat Al-Wada and

then bade them farewell. The army pitched its tents at Ma'an in southern Jordan. There they found out that Heraclius was stationed close by at Ma'ab with a hundred thousand forces, and another hundred thousand Christians had joined his forces. The news disconcerted the Muslims who were unsure of what to do. For two nights, they sat conferring about the situation, wondering whether to wade into the battlefield outnumbered or to send for reinforcements. Then Abdullah bin Rawaha made this impassioned speech to his brother Muslims.

> Men, you evade that, by Allâh, for which you came out—martyrdom. We do not fight the enemy on the strength of our power. We fight them with the religion we have been granted by Allâh. Come, we shall profit both ways. Either we win or we court martyrdom.

The men pondered over this speech and said, "Ibn Rawaha speaks the truth." Thus, they forged ahead and pitched their tents at Muta, where they took up their positions and prepared to meet the enemy.

Fierce fighting broke out in one of the most striking yet little mentioned engagements in human history, when 3,000 soldiers from the nascent Muslim state challenged the might of 200,000 heavyweights of the Roman empire. The Roman army lumbered on, fighting the whole day but utterly failing to break a small but formidable side. Their array of weaponry failed to give them the edge because they lost their best fighters.

The standard of the Muslim detachment was held by Zayd bin Haritha. He kept fighting ferociously until he was pierced by the enemy lances. The standard was then taken up by Ja'far. As the battle surged to its bloodiest and fiercest point, he jumped off his charger and pounced on his enemies. When his right hand was hacked off, Ja'far took the standard in his left hand. When it too was cut off, he took the standard in his lap to keep it aloft.

Ja'far remained on the battlefield until more than ninety wounds

were inflicted on his chest, and he succumbed to them to join the rest of the Muslim martyrs. The Prophet's standard was then taken up by Abdullah bin Rawaha. He moved ahead and then dismounted from his horse and pressed onwards until he too attained martyrdom.

Thabit bin Arqam, who was nearby, flew to the side of the sinking Abdullah bin Rawaha to save the Prophet's standard from fluttering down to the ground, and it was he who asked the Muslims to nominate by consensus Rawaha's successor. Their choice was Khalid bin Waleed, who had so often proved his strength against them as a general for the Quraysh. Thus, the standard was transferred to Khalid, who came to be known as one of the Swords of Allâh. Khalid advanced towards the Romans and fought against them with such fierceness that nine swords were broken at his hands.

Sitting in Madinah that same day, the Prophet ﷺ was inspired by Allâh with the knowledge of the events on the battlefield far away in Muta. He gave the people the news of the martyrdom of the three Muslim commanders and informed them that the command had been handed over to Khalid bin Waleed, whom he then referred to as one of Allâh's Swords.

As the sun set, both armies went back to their respective camps. The following morning Khalid bin Waleed رضي الله عنه changed the order of his troops. He put the front-line soldiers behind while the rear guard was brought forward. The soldiers on the left flank were put to the right and those on the right were moved to the left. The Romans were misled into thinking that fresh reinforcements had arrived, and they were completely dismayed at this development.

After a mild skirmish, Khalid ordered his troops to retreat, but the enemy dared not advance for they thought the Muslim retreat was a ruse. Thus, the Muslims drew closer to Muta and the skirmishes continued for seven days until both sides retreated and the battle ended, in part, because the Romans thought that

the Muslim troops were receiving continual reinforcements. They feared that the Muslims planned to lure them into the desert from where it was almost impossible to come out safe.

The Mission to Dhat Al-Salasil

This expedition was named after the stream and the tract of land where the Muslim troops camped, and took place in Jamadi Al-Akhir, 8 A.H.

The pro-Roman stand of the Syrian Arabs during the engagement of Muta had proved to be nearly disastrous for the Muslims, and the Prophet ﷺ decided that they had to be neutralized. To this end, one month after the encounter at Muta, he dispatched a delegation of three hundred men under Amr bin Aas ﷺ. Thirty horses were also sent with the men, whose mission was to win over the Bala clan, to which Amr's paternal grandmother belonged. If they failed to secure a guarantee of neutrality in future conflicts, the Muslims were to launch a punitive strike against the Bala for siding with the Romans.

As Amr and his men drew near Syria, they learned that the Syrians were already massing a sizable army of their own. Amr sent for reinforcements, and the Prophet ﷺ accordingly sent two hundred prominent fighters headed by Ubaydah bin Jarrah, but Amr bin Aas remained Commander-in-Chief and *Imam*.

After the arrival of the reinforcements, the Muslim troops overran a large area of Qadaa. When they came across an enemy detachment, they attacked, and the enemy scattered.

The battle for Makkah

In Ramadan, 8 A.H., Allâh honored His Messenger ﷺ with the conquest of Makkah. The event was the greatest victory in the history of the faith. Through it, Allâh elevated and exalted His religion and His Prophet ﷺ, and liberated His Sacred Mosque and His City from the infidels. The conquest of Makkah led to people entering Islam in multitudes.

The seeds of the battle lay in the Treaty of Hudaybia. According to its terms, all parties were free to enter alliances with either the Quraysh or the Prophet ﷺ. Accordingly, Banu Khuzaa, as previously mentioned, sided with the Muslims, while their rivals, Banu Bakr, entered a pact with the Quraysh.

The Banu Bakr and Banu Khuzaa had been feuding long before the advent of Islam and were in the midst of a rare peaceful interlude during the campaign of Hudaybia. With the mighty Quraysh on their side, the Banu Bakr decided to capitalize on their strength, and in Sha'ban, 8 A.H., they made a night raid on Banu Khuzaa as they camped at a spring called Wateer. Banu Bakr killed more than twenty men of Banu Khuzaa and drove the rest into Makkah. Contravening all rules, they fought them even inside the sacrosanct city with the support of the Quraysh, who clandestinely helped them with men and materials.

Since Banu Khuzaa were bound in an alliance with the Muslims and some of their men had embraced Islam, they reported the clash to the Prophet ﷺ, who assured them, "By Allâh, we shall protect you with what we protect ourselves."

The Quraysh, on the other hand, knew they had transgressed greatly and grew worried about the possible consequences of violating the treaty. They therefore sent Abu Sufyan bin Harb to Madinah to ratify the treaty and seek its extension. Abu Sufyan came to Madinah on his mission, and while he was there he visited his daughter, Umm Habeebah رضي الله عنها, who was married to the Prophet ﷺ. When Abu Sufyan made to sit on the Prophet's bed, she rolled it up. His pride hurt, Abu Sufyan said, "Daughter, I cannot understand whether you think the bed is too good for me or that I am too good for the bed."

She replied, "The fact is that it is the Prophet's bed, and you are an unclean polytheist."

"By God," said Abu Sufyan, stung at his daughter's succinct and unflattering description of him, "Evil has come over you since

you left me."

Abu Sufyan then went to the Prophet ﷺ and talked to him about ratifying the treaty but did not receive a reply. Then he went to Abu Bakr ؓ and asked him to speak on his behalf to the Prophet, but Abu Bakr refused. He then approached Umar ؓ, who not only rejected his offer, but also spoke to him rudely. Ali ؓ, when approached, pleaded his inability to intervene. He suggested that Abu Sufyan simply announce a general cessation of hostilities and leave. Abu Sufyan proceeded accordingly and returned to Makkah.

The Prophet ﷺ, on the other hand, had started preparations for war. He issued orders to his Companions and had the news announced among the Bedouins on the outskirts of Madinah, even as he enjoined secrecy. He prayed, "O Allâh, confound the spies and the informers of the Quraysh so that we may take them by surprise in their own land."

In order to mislead the enemy, the Prophet ﷺ sent Abu Qatadah ؓ towards Batn Adam so that everyone would assume he had that territory in mind. Hatib bin Abu Balta'a, however, wrote a letter to the Quraysh informing them that the Prophet ﷺ intended to attack Makkah. He handed the letter to a woman, promising to pay her for delivering it to the Quraysh.

The Prophet ﷺ, who had received divine revelation about Hatib's treachery, sent off Ali, Miqdad, Zubayr and Abu Marthad Ghanwi in pursuit of the woman. He said to them, "Ride until you come to the meadow of Khakh. There you will find a woman traveling on a camel. She has a letter which you must take from her."

They went ؓ off to find the woman, who denied having any such letter with her. Only after the men threatened to search her person did she draw the letter out from her tresses and hand it over to them. The company took the letter and returned to the Prophet ﷺ who summoned Hatib. The Prophet said, "What's this, Hatib"?

Hatib offered him this explanation, "I have my family in Makkah, but no kinsmen among the Quraysh to protect them. I wanted to oblige the Quraysh so that they would protect my family. I have not done this to renounce Islam or to commit unbelief."

Umar said furiously, "O Messenger of Allâh, give me leave to cut off his head. He has committed breach of trust with Allâh and His Prophet, and has turned Hypocrite."

The Prophet ﷺ replied, "He was present at Badr. Do you know, Umar, perhaps Allâh has looked favorably on those who were present at Badr and has said to them, 'Do as you wish for I have forgiven you'"?

At these words, Umar dissolved into tears saying, "Allâh and His Messenger know better."

On the way to Makkah

On Ramadan 10, 8 A.H., the Prophet ﷺ left Madinah for Makkah. Ten thousand Companions accompanied him. At Jahfa, the Prophet ﷺ came across his uncle Abbas, who was en route with his family to Madinah after converting to Islam. The Prophet's cousins, Abu Sufyan bin Harith and Abdullah bin Abu Umayya, also crossed his path, but the Prophet ﷺ averted his gaze. Both men used to lampoon him viciously and their words had wounded the Prophet. At this, Umm Salamah commented to the Prophet ﷺ, "It is not fitting that your cousins should be the only unfortunates." Ali meanwhile instructed Abu Sufyan (not to be confused with Abu Sufyan bin Harb, the commander-in-chief of the pagan forces) to appear before the Prophet ﷺ and say to him what the prophet Yusuf's brothers had said to him when they finally met in Egypt:

﴿ قَالُوا تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ آثَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِن كُنَّا لَخَاطِئِينَ ﴾ [يوسف: ٩١]

"They said: We swear by Allâh that Allâh has preferred you to us, and we certainly have been guilty of sin."

(12:91)

A shamefaced Abu Sufyan came to the Prophet ﷺ and apologized, using the words of Yusuf's brothers. The Prophet ﷺ himself echoed what Yusuf had said to his brothers:

﴿ قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ ﴾

[يوسف: ٩٢]

> "This day let no reproach be cast upon you: Allâh will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy." (12:92)

Thus forgiven, Abu Sufyan bin Harith recited a few couplets praising the Prophet and apologizing for his past behavior.

On reaching Kadeed, the Prophet ﷺ found fasting unbearable while traveling. He broke his fast and told his Companions to do the same. He then resumed his journey until he arrived at Marra Al-Dhahran around the time of *Isha* prayer. Each soldier was instructed to light a fire for himself, and in this way ten thousand fires burned in the night, with Umar bin Khattab ﷺ supervising the whole exercise.

The spectacle of ten thousand campfires startled Abu Sufyan bin Harb, commander of the pagans. He brought along Hakim bin Hazam and Budayl bin Waraqa to observe the sight and said in amazement, "Never have I seen a fire and troops such as I find today."

Budayl commented, "It is probably Khuzaa."

Abu Sufyan dismissed his remark saying, "Banu Khuzaa are too inferior to have such a fire and force."

Abu Sufyan appears before the Prophet ﷺ

As Abbas ﷺ was making rounds on the back of the Prophet's ﷺ mule, he heard a voice and he called out in instant recognition, "Abu Handhla?"

Abu Sufyan responded, asking "Abul Fadl?"

"Yes," said Abbas.

Abu Sufyan then asked Abbas, "May my parents be ransomed for you, what is the matter?"

Abbas said, "Look! The Prophet ﷺ is here with his army. What destruction awaits the Quraysh!"

Abu Sufyan asked, "May my mother and father ransom you, what do you suggest we do?"

Abbas said, "If any Muslim learns of your presence, you will surely be killed. Here, ride on the back of my mule and I will take you to the Prophet."

Thus Abu Sufyan sat behind Abbas and set out to see the Prophet ﷺ. Umar bin Khattab ؓ saw him and said, "Is that you, Abu Sufyan, enemy of Allâh? Praise be to Allâh that He gave you to us without any agreement."

Umar rushed towards the Prophet ﷺ to inform him of the unwelcome visitor. Abbas, on the other hand, spurred his mule ahead and reached the Prophet ﷺ before Umar did. Umar, undaunted, followed them in and asked the Prophet for permission to kill Abu Sufyan.

Abbas interjected, "I have given him shelter." He then caught the Prophet's head and said, "None will whisper with the Prophet tonight other than myself." Umar repeatedly asked for the Prophet's consent to kill Abu Sufyan, but the Prophet ﷺ was silent.

Turning to Abbas the Prophet ﷺ said, "Take him [Abu Sufyan] to your house and come to me tomorrow morning."

Morning arrived and so did Abu Sufyan. The Prophet said to him, "Woe to you Abu Sufyan, is it not time you acknowledge that there is no god except Allâh?"

Abu Sufyan said, "May my mother and father be your ransom,

how kind and gentle and noble you are. I think that if there had been another god besides Allâh, he would have been of help to me this day."

The Prophet ﷺ said again, "Woe to you Abu Sufyan! Is it not time that you acknowledge me as Allâh's Prophet and Messenger?"

Abu Sufyan said, "I still have some doubt as to that."

Abbas intervened saying, "Embrace Islam before you lose your head." Abu Sufyan then recited the confession of faith and thus he entered Islam.

Abbas said, "O Messenger of Allâh! Abu Sufyan loves honor. Bestow on him some honor."

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Very well then, anyone who enters Abu Sufyan's house is safe, he who shuts his door upon himself is safe, and he who enters the Sacred Mosque is safe."

The Prophet ﷺ enters Makkah

That same morning the Prophet ﷺ left his camp for Makkah. He instructed Abbas to take Abu Sufyan to a hill at the end of the valley, where he could review the Muslim troops on the march. Abbas obeyed the Prophet's instructions and took Abu Sufyan to observe the Muslim army that surged like an ocean in front of him.

Different tribes marched by Abu Sufyan with their tribal colors, and as each marched ahead, he asked Abbas the name of the tribe. When he was told the name of the tribe, he mumbled gloomily, "What have I to do with them?"

Then came the detachment of the *Ansar* with Sa'd bin Ubadah holding the standard. Sa'd passed by Abu Sufyan and called out, "Abu Sufyan, today is a day of conflict and bloodshed. Today the *Ka'bah* will be made lawful for us."

Abu Sufyan said, "O Abbas! Congratulations on the day of destruction and plunder."

Finally, the Prophet ﷺ himself passed by, flanked by the *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* who were completely covered in armor save for their eyes. Abu Sufyan sighed and said, "Abbas, who are these?" When Abbas told him that it was the Prophet approaching, accompanied by the *Ansar* and the *Muhajireen*, Abu Sufyan said, "Who has the power to resist them? The empire of your nephew has assumed splendid proportions."

Abbas said, "Such is prophethood."

Abu Sufyan said in resignation, "Yes, of course."

Abu Sufyan took Sa'd's challenge very seriously, and he went to the Prophet ﷺ and repeated what Sa'd had said. The Prophet ﷺ was displeased with Sa'd's bragging and replied:

> "Nay, the *Ka'bah* will be raised in honor today; the *Ka'bah* will be clothed today."

Saying this, the Prophet took the standard from Sa'd and gave it to his son, Qays, for he was worried that in the euphoria of victory Sa'd might unleash terror on the citizens of Makkah.

As the Prophet ﷺ passed by, Abu Sufyan hurried back to Makkah and announced loudly:

> "O people of the Quraysh, this is Muhammad who has come to you with an army you cannot resist. Now he who enters Abu Sufyan's house will be safe."

"Allâh destroy you," cried some of the Quraysh in dismay. "How can your house accommodate us all?"

Abu Sufyan then added, "He who shuts his door upon himself will also be safe, just as he who enters the Sacred Mosque will be safe." At that, the people dispersed to take shelter in their houses and in the *Ka'bah*.

When the Prophet ﷺ arrived at Dhu Tuwa, he ordered Khalid bin Waleed and the left flank of the army to enter the lower part of

Makkah via Kada. Anyone among the Quraysh who resisted was to be killed. The army was to proceed and meet up with the Prophet at Mount Safa.

The Prophet's standard bearer and commander of the right wing, Zubayr, was commanded to make his entry into Makkah through the upper part of Kada and to pitch his standard at Hajoon. He and the troops were to stay there until the arrival of the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Ubaydah, the commander of the infantry and the unarmed soldiers, was to go along the route leading from inside the valley and to descend into Makkah ahead of the Prophet ﷺ.

At this stage, the Quraysh assembled some of their men under Safwan Ibn Umayyah, Ikramah Abi Jahl and Sahl ibn Amr at Khandama and entrusted them with the last vestige of resistance against the Muslim army. If they too fell, there was no choice but to accept the Muslim supremacy over Makkah. And indeed that day there was no choice before the Quraysh but to accept Allâh's decree. After nearly twenty-one years of patience and endurance of persecution, Allâh's Messenger would finally enter His Sacred Mosque, victorious and unchallenged.

Khalid and his men passed the company and made short work of the Makkan resistance. Twelve of the pagans were killed and the rest took to their heels. Once he had dismissed this contingent, no barriers remained in Khalid's way. He and his men charged into Makkah, marching through the streets and by lanes without any opposition. Two men who got separated from them were killed. Finally, at Safa, Khalid and his men met up with the Prophet ﷺ.

Zubayr, on the other hand, arrived at Hajoon and planted his standard near Fath mosque. He put up a tent there for Umm Salamah and Maymoona, and in compliance with the Prophet's instructions, he waited for the Prophet ﷺ to arrive there. When the Prophet got there, he rested briefly and then moved forward accompanied by Abu Bakr.

At last, the moment ordained by Allâh arrived, and His servant was finally free to worship Him without impediment. Humble in victory, flanked by his followers, the Prophet ﷺ entered the Sacred Mosque reciting Surah Fath. He then kissed the Black Stone and circumambulated the *Ka'bah*. Around it were 360 idols that the pagans had placed over the years. He prodded each with a stick in his hand reciting the following two verses:

﴿ وَقُلْ جَآءَ ٱلْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ ٱلْبَٰطِلُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلْبَٰطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا ﴾ [الإسراء: ٨١]

"Truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Truly, falsehood is ever bound to vanish." (17:81)

﴿ قُلْ جَآءَ ٱلْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِئُ ٱلْبَٰطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ ﴾ [سبأ: ٤٩]

"The Truth has arrived, and falsehood can neither prove nor disprove anything." (34:49)

The *Ka'bah* is purified

After the Prophet ﷺ had circled the House of Allâh, he sent for Uthman bin Talha who held the keys of the *Ka'bah*. He took the keys from Uthman and had the doors opened. The idols inside were removed and destroyed, and all the pictures rubbed out. Following this the Prophet ﷺ entered the structure with Usama bin Zayd and Bilal and shut the door. He then faced the front wall and stood at a distance of three cubits thereof, and keeping one pillar on his left, two on the right, and three at the rear, offered two *Rak'ah* in prayer. He then went around the Sacred Mosque praising and glorifying Allâh.

Have no fear this day

The Prophet ﷺ then opened the door of the *Ka'bah*. By then the area around the *Ka'bah* was packed with the Quraysh, who apprehensively awaited his next step. The Prophet ﷺ stood at the door of the *Ka'bah*, holding its frame, while the Quraysh arrayed themselves in front of him. To his old persecutors, humbled thus before him, he spoke at length, as he explained several injunctions of Islam and annulled all pagan practices. He then

asked the Quraysh, “O Quraysh, what do you think I am about to do with you?”

“We hope for the best,” they replied. “You are a noble brother, and son of a noble brother.”

The Prophet said simply:

> “Have no fear this day: go your way for you are all free.”

The Prophet ﷺ descended and sat in the Sacred Mosque. He then returned the keys to Uthman bin Talha and said, “The key shall remain with you and none but a tyrant would take it from you.”

The Quraysh pledge allegiance

The Prophet ﷺ then climbed Mount Safa until he could see the *Ka'bah*. He then raised his hands in prayer. When he had finished, the people came up to confess their faith and pledge their allegiance. Among those who became Muslim that day was Abu Qahafa, the father of his dear Companion, Abu Bakr, and the Prophet ﷺ expressed great joy at his conversion. Women also came up and asked to be admitted into Islam, and the Prophet ﷺ administered the following oath to them without shaking their hands:

> “Pledge that you will not associate anything with Allâh, steal, commit adultery, kill your children, slander anyone, nor disobey me.”

Among the women who took the oath of allegiance that day was Hind bin Utbah, wife of Abu Sufyan. She came veiled and in disguise, as she feared for her life. What she had done to the dead body of Hamzah had been unforgivable, and the fear of retribution gnawed at her. After taking the oath, she said:

> “O Messenger of Allâh, there was no tent on the face of the earth more detested by me than yours, but now your tent is the dearest of all to me. ”

Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ remarked, “By the One in Whose hand lies the life of Muhammad, it is so.”

Umar bin Khattab sat below the Prophet's seat, relaying the Prophet's words to the people, and administering the oath of allegiance on behalf of the Prophet.

Some people came up to pledge their willingness to migrate for the sake of Islam, but the Prophet ﷺ said:

> "The *Muhajireen* have garnered all the reward of *Hijrah* [migration for the sake of Allâh]. Now that Makkah has been conquered, there can be no more migration. However, *Jihad* remains open to you and so does the intention to make *Jihad*. When you are called upon to fight in Allâh's way, go forth."

Death for criminals

The general amnesty notwithstanding, the Prophet ﷺ sentenced the worst criminals to death that day, and issued orders to kill them even if they were found clinging to the covering of the *Ka'bah*. Allâh's wrath had finally descended upon them and the vast earth appeared constricted as they faced retribution. However, it is also illuminating to reflect that of all the population of Makkah who had waged war against Islam, only four people were killed that day. They were Ibn Khatal, Muqis bin Sababa, Harith bin Nufayl, and one of the maids of Ibn Khatal. Some sources say that Harith bin Talat Al Khuza'i and Umm Sa'd were also slain, but it is thought that Umm Sa'd was none other than the maid of Ibn Khatal. Thus, no more than six were punished by death.

Four others escaped death. They fled or hid and returned to embrace Islam once they were guaranteed a pardon. They were Abdullah bin Sa'd bin Abi Sarh, Ikrama bin Abu Jahl, Habbar bin Aswad, and another maid of Ibn Khatal. Some sources add the names of Ka'b bin Zuhayr, Wahshi bin Harb, and Hind bint Utbah, the wife of Abu Sufyan, bringing the number to seven persons in all.

Some others from the Quraysh, such as Safwan bin Umayya, Zuhayr bin Abu Umayya, and Suhayl bin Amr hid themselves, even though they were not condemned to death. Subsequently, they all embraced Islam.

Prayer of victory

At midmorning, the Prophet ﷺ entered the house of his cousin, Umm Hani bint Abi Talib, where he bathed and prayed eight *Rak'ah,* in units of two each. In the same house cowered the two pagan brothers-in-law of Umm Hani. When Ali found out that his sister was shielding them, he immediately wanted to kill them, but Umm Hani went to the Prophet ﷺ, who said to her, "I grant refuge to whomever you have given refuge."

Bilal calls the *Adhan* from the *Ka'bah*

When it was time for *Zuhr* prayer, the Prophet ﷺ asked Bilal رضي الله عنه to call the *Adhan* from the roof of the *Ka'bah* as a proclamation of the dominance of Islam. How pleasing to Muslim ears and how loathsome to the polytheists it was to hear the declaration of Allâh's supremacy in His Sacred House.

The Prophet ﷺ in Makkah

When the conquest of Makkah was complete, the *Ansar* grew worried that the Prophet ﷺ would stay on in Makkah, home of his ancestors and his tribe. They expressed their concern to the Prophet ﷺ as he stood with his hands raised in prayer on Mount Safa. After his prayer was over, he allayed their fears. "Allâh forbid that I should do so. I will live and die with you."

The Prophet ﷺ stayed for nineteen days in Makkah, during which period he obliterated every vestige of the *Jahiliyah*, the Age of Ignorance that preceded Islam. Makkah became an Islamic city. The Prophet ﷺ erected pillars to demarcate the boundaries of the Sacred Mosque. Following this, a crier announced that whoever believed in Allâh and the Hereafter was to destroy any idols that remained in his house.

Uzza, Suwa and Manah are destroyed

On the 25th of Ramadan, the Prophet ﷺ dispatched Khalid bin Waleed to Nakhlah at the head of thirty cavalrymen to demolish the temple of Uzza. The idol of Uzza was the biggest, and Khalid smashed it to pieces. In the same month, Amr bin Aas ؓ was sent to demolish the idol of Suwa, the chief deity of Banu Hudhayl. Amr arrived at the shrine in Rabat, 150 km north east of Makkah, and razed it to the ground. Its priest saw the inanimate object submit itself to destruction, and he was overcome with the realization that no creator could be destroyed thus.

One more false god remained, and the Prophet sent Sa'd bin Zayd Ash'hali at the head of twenty cavaliers to destroy Manah, the deity of the Kalb, Khuzaa, Ghassan, Aus and Khazraj tribes. Sa'd broke the idol and demolished its temple, removing one more loathed rival of Allâh, the One the Eternal, of whom no likeness can ever be made.

Khalid is sent to Banu Judhayma

Realizing the need to instill Islam in the hearts of as many people as possible, the Prophet ﷺ sent Khalid bin Waleed ؓ to Banu Judhayma in the month of Shawwal to preach Islam. He was accompanied by three hundred men of the *Muhajireen*, *Ansar* and Banu Sulaym. When Banu Judhayma were invited to accept Islam, they cried, "*Sabana*! *Sabana*! We have left our religion! We have left our religion!" Their answer reeked of deceit to Khalid, who rounded them up and killed some of them. Later he ordered every Muslim soldier to kill his captive, but Ibn Umar and his comrades refused to carry out such an unjust order.

On their return, the dissenters placed the matter before the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet, horrified at what Khalid had done, prayed with his hands raised, "O Allâh, do not hold me to account for Khalid's act." He then sent Ali to Banu Judhayma to pay blood money to the relatives of those slain and to

compensate those whose property had been destroyed. The money that was left over after payment of compensation was also left with the tribe.

Khalid's actions during the expedition earned him criticism from several of the Prophet's Companions, and there were angry exchanges between him and Abdul Rahman bin Auf ﷺ. When this altercation was reported to the Prophet ﷺ, he said:

> "Khalid, refrain from saying anything harsh to my Companions. By Allâh, if Mount Uhud turned into gold and you were to spend it all in the way of Allâh, even then you would not equal the morning or evening prayer of any one of my Companions."

Battle of Hunayn

The conquest of Makkah had silenced its citizens, but neighboring tribes clamored for a confrontation. Qays Milan assembled for consultation, with Banu Thaqif and Banu Hawazen in the forefront. They said among themselves, "As Muhammad has already won the war against his people, none remains to prevent him from fighting against us. Why should we not take the initiative?"

Accordingly, they decided to fight and mustered a large army under Malik bin Auf Nasari. They came down to Autas, their women, children and livestock with them. An old veteran, Durayd bin Simma, who was highly reputed in the art of warfare, accompanied the Hawazen army. When Durayd heard the groaning camels, the braying asses, the bleating sheep and goats and the crying children, he asked Malik to explain their presence in the army. Malik replied that each member of the army was to be followed by his family and material possessions so that each man would fight fiercely to defend them.

Durayd said, "By God, you are a shepherd! Who can block the way of the deserter? Behold! If you win the battle, it is you alone

who will be the winners with your swords and spears; if you are defeated, you will be disgraced in front of your families." Then he advised Malik to send the non-combatants back home, but the latter refused. He assembled the women, children and livestock in Autas while he himself proceeded to the neighboring valley of Hunayn with the troops, and lay in ambush.

When informed of the developments, the Prophet ﷺ marched on at the head of twelve thousand soldiers from Makkah on Saturday, Shawwal 6, 8 A.H. He took one thousand coats of mail and other weaponry from Safwan bin Umayya on credit, and the administration of Makkah was entrusted to Uqab bin Usayd.

On the way, the troops came across a big tree named Dhat Al-Anwat. It was a shrine to the pagan deity of war. From its branches, the pagan Arabs suspended their weapons, offered sacrifices beneath it and performed some rites of propitiation. Some people who had not quite grasped the essence of Islam beseeched the Prophet ﷺ, "Make us a Dhat Al-Anwat similar to theirs."

At this the Prophet ﷺ replied, "Allâh is Most Great! You have said what the people of Musa said to him:

﴿ ٱجْعَل لَّنَآ إِلَـٰهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٣٨]

"'Fashion for us a god similar to their gods.' Musa replied: 'You are an ignorant people!'" (7:138)

The Prophet ﷺ then added, "Verily, you will follow every custom of the people before you."

The Muslims exuded overconfidence because of their great strength. Some even exulted that they could not be defeated now for want of numbers, and the Prophet ﷺ grew displeased at their arrogance.

When evening set in, a cavalier brought the news that Banu Hawazen had come out along with their women, children, camels, and goats. The Prophet ﷺ smiled and remarked, "*Inshaa*

Allâh, all these will become the spoils of war for the Muslims."

On the tenth of Shawwal, the Prophet ﷺ reached Hunayn. Before descending the valley at dawn, the Prophet arrayed the troops. He gave the standard of the *Muhajireen* to Ali bin Abi Talib, the standard of the Aus to Usayd bin Hudhayr, and that of the Khazraj to Hubab bin Mundhir. Each clan had its standard bearer. The Prophet ﷺ himself wore a double coat of arms and a helmet covering his head and face. The vanguard then began to descend the valley, unaware of the enemy troops lying in wait.

The Muslim soldiers were still in the process of descending when the enemy troops sprang on them like a swarm of locusts. The onslaught forced the Muslim flanks to fall back and they fled in terror, each unheeding of the other. Those in the rear followed suit, and a complete rout of the Muslims was in sight.

This turn of events gladdened the hearts of the polytheists and the token converts to Islam. Abu Sufyan remarked, "Their [the Muslims'] flight will not stop until they reach the sea."

Kildah, one of Safwan's brothers, rejoiced, "The spell of their sorcery has ended today!"

Another brother said, "Receive the glad tidings of the defeat of Muhammad and his followers! He will never be able to unite them."

Safwan, although a polytheist, chided those who mocked the Muslims and said, "By God, I would rather be defeated by a man from the Quraysh than a man from the Hawazen."

While his troops scattered in confusion, the Prophet ﷺ remained steadfast on the battlefield. He pressed ahead, spurring his mule and declared:

> "Verily, I am the true Prophet. I am the son of Abdul Muttalib."

Abu Sufyan bin Harith was holding the bridle of his mule, while

Abbas was holding the stirrup, trying to keep the Prophet from advancing toward the enemy too swiftly.

The Prophet ﷺ then dismounted and prayed to Allâh, seeking His help. Then he instructed Abbas, who had a booming voice, to call his Companions.

Abbas called out, “O comrades of the tree! [i.e. those who took the pledge of Ridwan] Where are you?”

All those who heard the cry were compelled to turn, and they called back: “Here we are!” Numbering about one hundred, they rushed purposefully toward the resounding voice. Reinforced thus, the Prophet ﷺ bore down upon the enemy, and a new battle between the two parties started.

A call was then given to the *Ansar* and then to Banu Al-Harith bin Khazraj, and the Muslim squadrons returned to the valley one after another. Peace descended upon the Prophet ﷺ and the believers, and an unseen army fought side by side with the Muslims who began to fight with fresh resolve. The Prophet ﷺ took a handful of dust and threw it at his enemies saying, “May their faces be disfigured.” At this the enemies' eyes were stung by the dust, and from that moment on they became confused and helpless. In disarray, they fled the battleground.

The Muslim army pursued their terrified enemies, killing some and capturing others with ease. Along with the captured soldiers, the Muslims also rounded up the women and children of their enemies. Only moments before the Muslims had appeared to be on the verge of defeat, but Allâh reunited them and endowed them with victory. Witnessing the Prophet's miraculous triumph, many pagans embraced Islam.

The polytheists take flight

Three groups of pagan soldiers managed to escape, the largest group fleeing to Tâ'if, another group to Nakhlah, and a third group barricaded themselves in Autas. The Prophet ﷺ sent Abu

Amir Ash'ari ﷺ, the uncle of Abu Musa Ash'ari ﷺ, to Autas at the head of a squadron. He successfully dispersed the enemy before being martyred. Abu Musa Ash'ari ﷺ then took over and led the squadron back with the spoils they had won.

Another squadron went on to Nakhlah in pursuit of the second group of pagans, and there they captured Durayd bin Simma and killed him.

At the end of the fight, the Prophet ﷺ asked his men to pile all the spoils of the battle in one spot. When everything was gathered, the spoils amounted to 24,000 camels, 40,000 or more goats, 160,000 dirhams worth of silver, and 6,000 women and children. The Prophet ordered everything to be taken to Jerana, and he appointed Ma'ud bin Amr Ghifari ﷺ to oversee the process.

The battle of Tâ'if

In Shawwal of the same year (8 A.H.), the Prophet ﷺ marched toward Tâ'if with a large Muslim army. As he passed by the citadel of Malik bin Auf Nasari, he ordered its demolition. By the time he reached Tâ'if, the citizens had already closed the city gates and had stocked enough provisions to last them a year. The Prophet ﷺ then began his siege of the city that had once expelled him when, unarmed and sincere, he had taken his message to its people.

The Muslims tried several devices to force the army of Tâ'if to lay down arms, but nothing proved successful. Khalid bin Waleed would go stand before the gate and challenge the people to come out and fight, but no one dared accept the challenge. Then catapults were brought into use, but they also proved ineffectual. A group of Muslims attempted to drill a hole in the wall; however, before they could finish they were repulsed by the defenders of Tâ'if, who dropped molten metal bits on them.

Finally, the Prophet ﷺ ordered that the city's renowned vineyards

and date palms be cut down. Vulnerable at last, the people of Tâ'if begged the Prophet ﷺ in the name of God to spare their orchards, at which he immediately took pity on the enemy and had his men stop.

The Prophet ﷺ then had someone announce that any slave who escaped from the city would be set free, a strategy designed to weaken the enemy numbers. Twenty-three slaves responded to this offer and fled. One of them scaled the wall and slid down the wheel used for drawing water, so the Prophet ﷺ dubbed him "Abu Bakrah," which means "Father of the wheel" in Arabic.

The siege was long, continuing for twenty days, while others estimate it lasted a month. Finally, the Prophet ﷺ consulted with Naufal bin Muawiyah Deli. "The fox has rushed into its hole," Naufal said. "If you remain firm, you will capture it; but if you leave it be, no harm will come to you." Heeding this bit of practical wisdom, the Prophet ﷺ ordered his men to break camp. Before they began the long journey back, some Muslims beseeched the Prophet ﷺ to curse the enemy.

As he looked back at the walled city, the Prophet ﷺ was faced with the same choice Allâh had given him years before when the people of Tâ'if had run him out of the city as if he were a criminal. "O Allâh," he said. "Guide the people of Tâ'if and rescue them from disbelief."

The spoils of war

The Muslims stayed in Je'rana for more than ten days on their way back from Tâ'if. The Prophet ﷺ waited for the Hawazen to repent and reclaim their property and families. Not one of them, however, showed up. At last the Prophet ﷺ took one-fifth of the booty and distributed it among the Muslims of weaker faith in order to win their hearts. He also gave large shares to those who had not embraced Islam, hoping that Islam would become dear to them.

Abu Sufyan, for example, received 1,600 dirhams worth of silver

and one hundred camels. His two sons, Yazeed and Muawiya, received the same amount. Safwan bin Umayya was given three hundred camels. Hakim bin Hazaam, Harith bin Harith bin Kaldah, Uyaynah bin Hisn, Aqra bin Habis, Abbas bin Mardas, Alqama bin Alatha, Malik bin Auf, Ala bin Haritha, Harith bin Hisham, Jubayr bin Mut'im, Suhayl bin Amr, Huyaitib bin Abdul Uzza and others received one hundred camels each, while many others were given forty or fifty camels each.

The news of the Prophet's lavish distribution of the booty to so many people spread far and wide. Here was a man who gave and gave without stint. The Bedouins grew greedy and began to demand gifts from the Prophet ﷺ. Some even chased him and pinned him against a tree. A Bedouin in a mad frenzy pulled the cloak off the Prophet's back. "Return my cloak," the Prophet ﷺ said:

«رُدُّوا عَليَّ رِدَائِي، فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَو كَانَ لِي عَدَدُ شَجَرِ تَهامَةَ نَعَمًا لَقَسَمْتُهُ عَلَيكُمْ. ثُمَّ مَا أَلفَيْتُمُونِي بَخِيلًا وَلاَ جبَانًا وَلاَ كَذَّابًا».

> "I swear by Allâh, He who holds my life in His hands, if I had as many cattle as Tihama has trees, I would have distributed them all to the people. You will find me neither a miser, nor a coward, nor a liar."

He (ﷺ) then cut a lock of hair from the hump of a camel and said:

«وَاللهِ مَا لِي مِنْ فَيْئِكُم، وَلاَ هَذِهِ الوَبَرَةِ، إلاَّ الخُمْسُ، وَالخُمَسُ مَرْدُودٌ عَليكُمْ، فَأَدُّوا الخِياط والمَخِيط، فَإِنَّ الغُلُولَ يَكُونُ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ عَارًا وَشنارًا وَنَارًا يومَ القِيَامَةِ».

> "By Allâh, I have kept nothing from the spoils for myself, not even this hair. Deposit everything you took from the enemy so that it can be divided, even a needle and thread. Stealing will result in disgrace, infamy and fire for the guilty on the Day of Resurrection."

The people, overcome with shame and fear at the Prophet's

words, deposited everything they had collected from the enemy. After this, the Prophet ﷺ asked Zayd bin Thabit to distribute the spoils.

The *Ansar's* Complaint

Some of the *Ansar* were aghast that the Prophet was giving away such a large portion of the spoils to the Quraysh while the *Ansar* received nothing. The last in faith, the most reluctant in battle had become the first in line for the fruits of victory. Someone among the *Ansar* said in outrage, "How can the Quraysh get everything when blood is still trickling from our swords?" The chieftain of the *Ansar*, Sa'd bin Ubada ﷺ, told the Prophet ﷺ of their sense of hurt and resentment.

"Tell them to assemble so that I can speak with them," the Prophet ﷺ said. After praising Allâh and mentioning the obligations that the *Ansar* had taken upon themselves, the Prophet ﷺ said:

«أوجَدْتُم يَا مَعْشَرَ الأَنْصَارِ فِي أَنْفُسِكُم فِي لُعَاعَةٍ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا تَأَلَّفْتُ بِهَا قَومًا لِيُسْلِمُوا، وَوَكَلْتُكُمْ إِلى إِسْلَامِكُم؟ أَلاَ تَرضَونَ يَا مَعْشَر الأنصَارِ أَن يَذْهَبَ النَّاسُ بِالشَّاةِ وَالبَعِيرِ، وَتَرْجِعُوا بِرَسُولِ اللهِ ﷺ إِلَى رِحَالِكُمْ، فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَولاَ الهِجْرَةُ لَكُنْتُ امْرَأً مِنَ الأَنْصَارِ، وَلَو سَلَكَ النَّاسُ شِعْبًا وَسَلَكَتِ الأَنْصَارُ شِعْبًا لَسَلَكْتُ شِعْبَ الأَنْصَارِ، اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمِ الأَنْصَارَ، وَأَبْنَاءَ الأَنْصَارِ، وَأَبْنَاءَ أَبْنَاءِ الأَنْصَارِ».

"O *Ansar*, you have shown displeasure because I gave some goods to such and such people so that they may embrace Islam. You, however, I entrusted with Islam. O *Ansar*, are you not satisfied that these men should take away sheep and goats while you go back with the Prophet of Allâh? I swear by the One Who holds the life of Muhammad in His hand, if there had been no migration, I

> would have been one of the *Ansar* myself. If everyone took one path, and the *Ansar* took another, I would follow the *Ansar*. O Allâh, have mercy on the *Ansar*, their sons and their sons' sons."

After hearing the Prophet's words, the *Ansar* began to see things in perspective. They wept until their beards were drenched. "We are satisfied that the Prophet ﷺ is with us," they said.

Banu Hawazen petition the Prophet ﷺ

Just as the spoils were about to be distributed, a delegation of Banu Hawazen, led by Zuhayr bin Sarad, called upon the Prophet ﷺ and embraced Islam. Once they had taken the oath of allegiance, they brought up the subject of their families and property taken in battle:

> "Those who you have brought as captives are our mothers, sisters and aunts, and they alone bring disgrace to peoples. O Prophet, we ask for your kindness and generosity. Free our women, for they come from the same tribe as she who suckled you when you were a baby."

The Prophet ﷺ asked Banu Hawazen to choose between reclaiming their families and their property. "We treasure nothing more than our children and women," they said. "We will not ask for the camels and goats."

"Tomorrow," the Prophet ﷺ said, "when I have finished leading the noon prayer, stand before the people and announce that you have embraced Islam. Then ask for your families to be returned to you." The next day the Hawazen followed the Prophet's instructions, and the Prophet ﷺ announced to the new Muslims, "Whatever was apportioned to me and Banu Abdul Muttalib is yours. I also recommend that others relinquish their captives to you."

The *Muhajireen* and *Ansar* said, "Whatever share has been given to us we now give to the Prophet ﷺ." Three Bedouins, however, refused to part with their shares. Their names were Aqra bin

Habis, Uyayna bin Hisn and Abbas bin Mardas. Seeing their reluctance to return their captives, the Prophet ﷺ urged them, "The best thing to do is to return your captives, because whoever does so will receive six times the number he relinquishes from the very next booty Allâh grants us."

Uyayna bin Hisn was the only one of the three to refuse the Prophet's request. Even after returning the captives each person was still left with either two camels or twenty goats. To each of the released captives, the Prophet ﷺ gifted a Coptic sheet.

The *Umrah* of Je'rana

Once the Prophet ﷺ had distributed the spoils, he put on his *Ihraam* and performed *Umrah*. This is known as the *Umrah* of Je'rana. After completing *Umrah*, the Prophet returned to Madinah, reaching home in the last week of Dhul Qa'dah, 8 A.H.

Banu Tameem enter Islam

In Muharram, 9 A.H., the news reached Madinah that Banu Tameem were inciting various tribes to refuse to pay *Jiziyah* (a tax levied on non-Muslims living under Muslim rule), so the Prophet ﷺ sent a squadron of fifty men under Uyayna bin Hisn Fazari to their stronghold. There in the desert, Uyayna captured eleven men from Banu Tameem and twenty-one of their women and children and brought them to Madinah.

A delegation of ten chieftains from Banu Tameem came hastily to Madinah. Conscious of their inability to match the Muslims militarily, the chieftains asked for a poetry contest to determine whose poets had the most eloquent speech. The challenge was accepted. Atarad bin Hajib of the Banu Tameem delivered a speech. He was answered by Thabit bin Qays from the Muslim side. Then Banu Tameem sent their poet Zabargan bin Badr to recite some verses. The Muslim poet Hassân bin Thabit countered with a recitation of his own poetry until Banu Tameem finally conceded defeat. So moved were they by what they had

heard from Hassân bin Thabit that they embraced Islam. The Prophet ﷺ then returned their captives and sent them home with gifts for their people. In this way, one more obdurate enemy melted before the sublime truth of Islam.

Mission against Banu Tai

The Prophet's work continued. He tried to make as many people accept Islam as he could. Using his words, his generosity, and last of all, physical strength, he tried to convince them of the truth. His mission was to destroy all false gods born out of ignorance and polytheism and to establish worship of Allâh alone. Accordingly, in Rabi' Al-Awwal, 9 A.H., the Prophet ﷺ sent Ali bin Abi Talib at the head of a squadron of one hundred and fifty men riding camels and horses to demolish Fils, the idol of the Banu Tai. The squadron carried a black standard and a small white flag into the town of the legendary Hatim Tai. They rounded up camels and goats and captured the women and children. Safana, the daughter of Hatim Tai, was among those captured.

The squadron then returned to Madinah with the captives. The Prophet ﷺ, out of respect for Safana's status as the great Hatim's daughter, released her without ransom and even provided her with conveyance. Safana went directly to Syria, where her brother, Adi bin Hatim, had taken refuge. There she related to him the benevolence and virtues of the Prophet ﷺ, remarking that even their father could not have acted in a like manner. She then advised Adi to present himself before the Prophet and ask for mercy.

So eloquent was Safana about the Prophet's magnanimity that Adi took his sister's advice and appeared before the Prophet ﷺ without even applying for safe conduct. After listening to the Prophet ﷺ explain the tenets of Islam, Adi became Muslim. While Adi was still with the Prophet ﷺ, a man called on the Prophet ﷺ complaining about a lack of food. Then another man

came up to complain about highway robbery. After they left, the Prophet ﷺ turned to Adi and said:

> "If you live long enough, you will see a woman come from Hirah by camel. She will go around the *Ka'bah* without fear for her safety. She will not fear anyone except Allâh. In addition, you will conquer the Persian Emperor and take his treasure. Furthermore, if you live long enough, you will see a person come out with a handful of gold and silver searching for a needy person to give it to, but he will find none."

Adi did live long enough to see each of the Prophet's prophecies fulfilled as Islam took root in the peninsula and beyond, and the Muslims grew in number and wealth.

With the conquest of Makkah, the Muslims' long struggle with the pagans of Arabia had all but ended. Despite several minor skirmishes here and there, Islam was destined to spread over the entire peninsula. It was then that a foreign power took notice of the political ascendancy of the Muslims.

The Romans, having grown confident after their success against the Persians, began to look toward Madinah and plan an assault against the Muslims, whom they viewed as a threat to their authority.

The Muslims' successful face off with the Roman forces at Muta had inspired many of the local tribes to seek independence. Their temerity was borne out of the fact that 3,000 Muslims had chased away a 200,000 strong Roman army. On the other hand, the Romans reasoned that if the Muslims were defeated, the rebellious tribes would be subdued permanently, and Arabia would disintegrate into an insignificant collection of bickering tribes that it had always been.

The Muslims prepare to meet the Romans

Hearing of the imminent Roman expedition against the Muslims,

the Prophet ﷺ asked the Muslims to prepare for what seemed an impossible task in the middle of the hot summer. At the time, the dates had just ripened, and people rested beneath the shady trees, seeking respite from the sun and exertion. The journey to Tabuk promised to be grueling.

As preparations got underway, the Prophet ﷺ urged the wealthy to donate handsomely to the battle fund and spend in the way of Allâh, and many of his more fortunate Companions complied, contributing generously. Abu Bakr ؓ donated four thousand dirhams, which was his entire fortune. The Prophet ﷺ asked him, "What have you left for your family?"

"For them I have left only Allâh and His Messenger," he replied.

Umar ؓ gave half of his wealth, and Uthman bin Affan ؓ donated ten thousand dinars, three hundred camels with saddles, and fifty horses. (Other sources mention that he donated nine hundred camels and one hundred horses.) The Prophet ﷺ remarked: "Whatever Uthman does from this day onward, he will suffer no harm."

Abdul Rahman bin Auf ؓ gave eight thousand dirhams worth of silver. Abbas, Talha, Sa'd bin Ubada and Muhammad bin Maslama also contributed much. Asim bin Adi gave thirteen thousand and five hundred kilograms of dates. Those with less wealth gave according to their abilities, and some could only donate a kilogram or so of food. The Muslim women gave their ornaments towards the cause.

The poorer Muslims also wanted to take part in the march to Tabuk , and they came to the Prophet ﷺ to ask for camels or horses to ride. "I have nothing for you to ride," the Prophet ﷺ told them. They could not hide their disappointment, and tears rolled down their cheeks. However, Uthman, Abbas, and some other Companions ؓ were able to find mounts for those who needed them.

As the Muslims prepared for the difficult mission, the Hypocrites set about the task of ruining the project before it even began. They taunted those who donated much of their wealth to the project and ridiculed those who contributed little. They also mocked the Prophet's ﷺ determination to face the formidable Romans. When asked to explain their remarks, they said they were merely jesting. As the time for departure drew near, the Hypocrites and the Bedouins offered trite excuses for not joining the expedition and sought permission to stay in Madinah. The Prophet ﷺ wisely allowed them to stay behind. Some Muslims also stayed behind, unable to make up their minds whether or not to go.

The expedition to Tabuk

Finally, the Muslims were ready to make the long journey across the desert to Tabuk. The Prophet ﷺ put Muhammad bin Maslama in charge of Madinah. Ali bin Abi Talib was left to look after the women and children. Abu Bakr Siddeeq carried the biggest standard of the army. Zubayr carried the flag of the *Muhajireen*, Usayd bin Hudhayr carried the flag of the Aus, and Hubab bin Mundhir carried the flag of the Khazraj.

With 30,000 men, the Prophet ﷺ set out for Tabuk on a Thursday, in the month of Rajab, 9 A.H. There were so few camels that eighteen men rode each one in turn. They also had so little food that they had to eat leaves which made their lips swell. In spite of the scarcity of camels, they were forced to slaughter some of them so that they could drink water from their stomachs and intestines.

Back in Madinah, Ali ؓ grew impatient with the taunts of the Hypocrites, and he decided to leave Madinah and join the Prophet ﷺ. When he finally caught up with the troops, the Prophet ﷺ asked him to return to Madinah saying, "Are you not content, Ali, that you are to me as Haroon [Aaron] was to Musa, except that there will be no Prophet after me?"

The Muslim forces halted at Al-Hijr, the land of the Thamood.

They were a nation to whom the Prophet Saleh was sent. Reckless in disbelief, they hamstrung a she-camel that Saleh had declared to be one of Allâh's signs, thereby bringing down Allâh's wrath upon themselves. A mighty earthquake wiped them out, and only their deserted dwellings testified that they had once walked the earth. When the Prophet saw his men draw water from the wells in the area and prepare dough for bread, he asked them to pour out the water taken from the wells and to feed the dough to the animals. Then he showed them the water Saleh's camel used to drink from and told them to draw water from there.

As the Muslims traveled through the bleak land of the rebellious Thamood, the Prophet ﷺ bade his men heed the consequences of disobedience of Allâh:

> "As you enter the houses of those who wronged themselves, fear that you may also meet the same fate that befell them."

The chastened Muslims covered their heads and walked swiftly across the valley.

The Prophet's army reached Tabuk after a journey of about four hundred kilometers. There they met Abu Khaythama, one of the Muslims who had stayed behind in Madinah without a valid excuse. He explained that after the Prophet ﷺ left Madinah, he entered his garden on a very hot day. Both his wives had sprinkled water around and brought him cold water and food. He then told his wives:

> "When the Prophet is subjected to scorching heat, should I enjoy cool shade, water and the sweet company of beautiful women? This is not just! By Allâh, I shall not enter my house until I meet the Prophet. Both of you prepare provisions for me."

His wives complied. Then Abu Khaythama mounted his camel,

took a sword and spear, and set out in search of the Prophet ﷺ.

Twenty days in Tabuk

When the Romans learned that the Muslims had crossed four hundred kilometers of desert to challenge them, they lost courage and elected not to face them in combat. Nevertheless, the Prophet ﷺ camped in Tabuk for twenty days in order to intimidate the Romans and their Christian Arab mercenaries by his sheer presence.

The Prophet ﷺ also received several delegations from the neighboring Arab tribes who were interested in making peace with Arabia's new rulers. Yuhanna bin Ru'ba, the governor of Aylah, called upon the Prophet ﷺ at this time. The parties of Jarba, Adhruh and Mina accompanied him. They agreed to pay *Jiziyah*, but remained undecided about embracing Islam. The Prophet ﷺ gave them in writing a guarantee of peace and safety for their territory, ships and caravans, by both land and sea.

Similarly, the Prophet ﷺ signed treaties with Jarba and Adhruh guaranteeing them peace and safety in return for one hundred dinars every year in Rajab. The people of Mina agreed to give one-fourth of all the fruits produced in their territory in return for peace and security.

Ukaydir is captured

The Prophet ﷺ sent Khalid bin Waleed رضي الله عنه with 420 cavalrymen to capture Ukaydir of Dumat Al-Jandal. The Prophet ﷺ told Khalid that he would find him hunting white antelopes. Khalid set out on his mission, and when he came close enough to see Ukaydir's citadel, a white antelope suddenly appeared and began to rub its horns against the citadel's gate. The animal caught Ukaydir's attention, and he came out to hunt it, not knowing that he would also be hunted. Khalid, who was lying in wait, captured Ukaydir and brought him to the Prophet ﷺ, who spared his life in return for two thousand camels, eight hundred slaves, four

hundred coats of mail, and four hundred spears. Ukaydir also promised to pay *Jiziyah* with the same conditions accepted by Aylah and Mina.

Return to Madinah

After spending twenty days in Tabuk, the Prophet ﷺ and his men began their journey back to Madinah. Up to now, the Prophet's expedition against the Romans had proceeded without a hitch. The Romans had represented a great threat to the Muslim dominance of Arabia, but the Muslims had camped in their dominion of Tabuk for twenty days in complete safety. They had even made pacts with local tribes that helped consolidate their hold on the peninsula. Things, however, were about to take an unexpected turn.

While returning to Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ and his men passed through a mountain pass. Most of the men took a route through the valley, while the Prophet ﷺ took another pass accompanied by only two of his Companions, Ammar and Hudhayfah bin Yaman.

Twelve Hypocrites from among the Muslims saw the Prophet's virtually solitary state as a great opportunity to assassinate him. After masking themselves, they followed him, waiting for the right moment.

Suddenly, they rushed toward him on their mounts, but the Prophet ﷺ told Hudhayfah to strike the faces of their horses with his shield. With this action, Allâh sent terror into the hearts of the Hypocrites, and they fled. They rode back to mingle with the rest of the squadron, but the Prophet ﷺ told Hudhayfah each of their names and their intention. From that day on, Hudhayfah was called the trusted confidant of the Prophet ﷺ.

Demolition of the Hypocrites' Mosque

The Prophet ﷺ had promised to perform the inaugural prayers in a newly built mosque in Qubaa, just outside Madinah, on his

return from Tabuk. He had been asked to do so when he was in the midst of planning the Tabuk expedition.

When the Prophet ﷺ reached Dhu Awan, just a day's journey from Qubaa, Jibreel visited him and revealed that the mosque had been built by the Hypocrites. The mosque was to serve as a meeting place for the Hypocrites where they could plot their various subversive activities to weaken Islam. By having the Prophet ﷺ pray there, they hoped to legitimize their gatherings. Thus forewarned of the threat to the Muslim nation from a mosque built on subversion rather than on piety, the Prophet ﷺ immediately sent men to Qubaa to demolish it.

The Prophet ﷺ is welcomed back

Weary but high spirited, the Muslim army approached Madinah at last. The Prophet ﷺ, upon seeing the city in the distance, pointed to the familiar landmarks and said: "This is Taba, and that is Uhud, the mountain that loves me and that I in turn love." When the people of Madinah heard that the Prophet ﷺ was approaching, the women and children rushed out of their homes in welcome, singing what they had sung nearly ten years ago when he came to them seeking a new home:

> "The full moon has risen upon us from Thaniyat Al-Wada.
> We owe thanks as long as the caller continues to call us."

The Prophet ﷺ then went to the mosque and prayed two *Rak'ah*, after which he sat in the mosque and received people. He had been away from Madinah for fifty days, and everyone wanted to welcome him home.

The case of those who stayed behind

The Hypocrites who had stayed behind came to the Prophet ﷺ to repeat their excuses. He did not criticize them, confident that Allâh would deal with them. Three Muslims had also failed to join the Tabuk expedition. They were Ka'b bin Malik, Murra bin Rabi'and Hilaal bin Umayya. Since they were able-bodied men,

their decision not to participate in *Jihad* was a serious matter. The Prophet ﷺ asked them to await Allâh's decision on the matter. In the meantime, the Prophet ﷺ forbade other Muslims from speaking to them.

As they awaited Allâh's verdict in the solitude of their homes, these three men suffered tremendously. They felt engulfed by darkness, and their souls were in deep distress. After forty days had passed, the Prophet ﷺ ordered the three men not to sleep with their wives. Finally, after fifty days, Allâh accepted their repentance, and the following verse was revealed:

﴿وَعَلَى ٱلثَّلَٰثَةِ ٱلَّذِينَ خُلِّفُواْ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا ضَاقَتۡ عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلۡأَرۡضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتۡ وَضَاقَتۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡ
أَنفُسُهُمۡ وَظَنُّوٓاْ أَن لَّا مَلۡجَأَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَّآ إِلَيۡهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ لِيَتُوبُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ
ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ﴾ [التوبة:١١٨]

> "And (Allâh has forgiven) those three who did not join (the Tabuk expedition. While they waited for Allâh's decision), the world closed in on them and they became dejected. They then realized that refuge lies only with Allâh, and then He forgave them so that they would repent. Indeed, Allâh is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful." (9:118)

This verse was received with great celebration. The world opened up again for the three men who had been shunned by their fellow Muslims. Everyone congratulated the men, and they gave charity to show their thankfulness.

Other verses were revealed concerning the Hypocrites and their show of faith. The verses described them and others like them as being diseased in their hearts, and although they were shown signs once or twice yearly, they did not repent, nor did they even contemplate the meaning of the signs.

The Prophet ﷺ mourns three Deaths

In Rajab, 9 A.H., the month of the Prophet's return from Tabuk, As-huma bin Abjar, the king of Abyssinia, passed away. He had

given the Muslims refuge when they were weak and oppressed by the Makkan pagans. Later, when he recognized that Islam was a continuation of the teachings of Ibraheem, Musa and Isa, he embraced Islam. Although he was not buried in Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ offered funeral prayers for him when he received the news.

Then in Sha'ban of the same year, the Prophet's daughter, Umm Kulthoom رضـي الله عنـها, also died. The Prophet ﷺ led her funeral prayer and buried her in the graveyard at Madinah, Baqi. Deeply saddened at her death, the Prophet recognized the grief of her bereaved husband, Uthman ﷺ, and said to him, "If I had a third daughter, I would have given her to you in marriage."

A couple of months later in Dhul Qa'dah, Abdullah bin Ubayy died. Ever merciful, the Prophet ﷺ prayed for his forgiveness and even led the funeral prayer. Umar ﷺ asked the Prophet ﷺ not to lead the prayer for the dead leader of the Hypocrites, but the Prophet ﷺ would not be dissuaded. Later, however, Allâh revealed verses instructing the Prophet ﷺ not to offer funeral prayers for the Hypocrites.

Ghazawat

During the Age of Ignorance, the Arabs regarded war as a chance to massacre the weak, plunder their goods, destroy their villages and cattle, and rape their women. Islam, however, changed the concept of war. War became a way to rescue the oppressed and punish the oppressors. The ultimate aim of fighting battles (*Ghazawat*) was to save people from the worship of idols and false gods and to bring them to Islam, the worship of Allâh.

Furthermore, before the advent of Islam, war was a way of life for the desert Arabs. The war between the tribes of Bakr and Taghlab lasted over forty years and resulted in the deaths of seventy thousand men. Similarly, the war between the Aus and Khazraj tribes lasted more than one hundred years, with neither side willing to surrender. It was the nature of the Arabs to

prolong wars rather than to bow to their enemies, even when the wars were fought over trifles.

When the Prophet ﷺ brought Islam to the Arabs, they responded in the way instinctive to them: they fought him. Nevertheless, the Prophet ﷺ first set out to conquer their hearts before resorting to the sword. In all the battles that the Prophet fought, the total number of people who died, Muslims, pagans, Jews and Christians combined, was about one thousand. Moreover, these battles spanned no more than eight years. In this short span, with so little bloodshed, the Prophet ﷺ brought almost the entire Arabian Peninsula under his sway.

Many historians inaccurately attribute the Prophet's success to mere military prowess. When we consider how fond the Arabs were of fighting, and how willing they were to sacrifice thousands of their men no matter how insignificant the cause, we realize that the Prophet ﷺ had weapons greater than the sword.

Abu Bakr ﷺ performs *Hajj*

The pagan Arabs considered themselves followers of the religion of Ibraheem ﷺ. Indeed, they had inherited *Hajj* (pilgrimage to the *Ka'bah*) from Ibraheem, although they had added many innovations to the rites.

When the Prophet ﷺ conquered Makkah, he put Atab bin Usayd ﷺ in charge. Everyone, Muslims and polytheists included, performed *Hajj* under his authority, but they performed it in the same manner as during the days before Islam. In the year following the conquest of Makkah (9 A.H.), the Prophet ﷺ sent Abu Bakr to lead the pilgrims in performing *Hajj*.

Abu Bakr ﷺ set out for Makkah with three hundred Muslims from Madinah at the end of Dhul Qa'dah. He took twenty of the Prophet's camels and five of his own for sacrifice. After Abu Bakr left, the opening verses of *Surah Al-Taubah* were revealed. These verses contained an important announcement for tribes

that had covenants with the Muslims. Any covenant that had not been honored would be broken, and any tribe that did not have a covenant with the Muslims would have a grace period of four months. Covenants that had been honored would remain valid.

The Prophet ﷺ sent Ali to Makkah to inform everyone of the new verses. On the day of the sacrifice, Ali ﷺ recited the new verses to the pilgrims. Abu Bakr ﷺ then sent a band of people to announce that from the next year, polytheists would not be allowed to perform *Hajj*, nor would anyone be allowed to practice the perverted tradition of circumambulating the *Ka'bah* in the nude.

The year of delegations

Most of the Arab tribes had watched the struggle between the Quraysh and the Prophet ﷺ with great interest, believing as they did that Allâh would protect the *Ka'bah*, and that the forces of Evil would not be able to conquer those of Truth. The Arabs had seen Allâh repulse Abraha's army and his great elephant when they tried to destroy the *Ka'bah*. Now they witnessed Allâh grant victory to Muhammad, and they saw it as a sign that Islam was the true religion.

Convinced that Muhammad ﷺ was the Prophet and Messenger of Allâh, the various Arab tribes began sending delegations to Madinah. Between seventy to one hundred delegations came to meet the Prophet ﷺ. Some came to ransom captives or to pay *Jiziyah*, while many others came to embrace Islam. Most of these delegations visited Madinah following the conquest of Makkah in the year 9 A.H., which became known as the year of delegations.

It is important to note, however, that even in Makkah, at the height of persecution by the Quraysh, the Prophet ﷺ had become famous, and several tribes, including the Aus and the Khazraj, had visited him in secret. After the Prophet's migration to Madinah, delegations continued to arrive until the ninth year

when their numbers swelled close to a hundred.

With tribe after tribe embracing Islam, the Islamic state grew until it stretched from the Red Sea to the Arabian Gulf, and from southern Jordan to Yemen and Oman. The Prophet ﷺ appointed governors and judges in each area to ensure that Islamic law was administered properly. He also sent knowledgeable teachers to the far reaches of the Islamic state so that everyone learned how to practice his religion correctly.

The delegations that visited the Prophet ﷺ were, in fact, instrumental in spreading Islam among the desert-dwelling Bedouins. Although each delegation came with different aims and objectives, the Prophet ﷺ made the same profound impression upon those he dealt with, and his fame spread throughout Arabia. Here was a man who had defeated the greatest tribe in Arabia, and yet he chose faith over wealth, mercy over revenge, and work over luxury. Many delegations accepted Islam after simply meeting with the Prophet ﷺ, and they would in turn encourage their tribes to discard paganism and become Muslim. Some of the more notable delegations are mentioned below.

The delegation of Banu Abdul Qays

The people of Abdul Qays, who lived in eastern Arabia, were the first to embrace Islam outside Madinah. Thus, the first Friday prayers offered outside the Prophet's Mosque were in the mosque of Abdul Qays, in the village of Jawathi, Bahrain.

The delegation of Banu Abdul Qays came twice, in 5 A.H. and in 9 A.H. The first delegation, comprising thirteen or fourteen people, saw the Prophet ﷺ at the mosque, and jumping down from their mounts right at the entrance of the mosque, they rushed to greet him.

However, one member of the delegation, Abdullah bin Auf Al-Ashj, who was the youngest of them all, did not rush toward the

Prophet ﷺ. He first made the camels kneel down and collected all of the goods from the saddlebags. He then took out clean clothes and put them on. Only then did he approach the Prophet ﷺ and greet him. The Prophet ﷺ praised Abdullah's behavior and remarked: "You have two characteristics beloved by Allâh and His Messenger. You are both far-sighted and patient."

Even before the arrival of this delegation, the Prophet ﷺ had told his Companions: "A caravan will appear before you. Its members are the best among the people of the east, and they willingly accepted Islam. They have exhausted their camels and their provisions. O Allâh, forgive Abdul Qays."

The Prophet ﷺ said to the delegation upon its arrival, "Welcome! You will neither be disgraced nor ashamed." They asked the Prophet to teach them something that they and their people could live by. The Prophet ﷺ asked them to perform four duties :

They were to bear witness (*Shahaadah*) that there was no deity except Allâh, and that Muhammad was His Prophet and Messenger. They were also to establish prayer (*Salaah*), pay the obligatory yearly charity (*Zakaah*) and fast Ramadan (*Sawm*).

Since *Hajj* had not yet been made obligatory, the Prophet ﷺ did not order the people of Banu Abdul Qays to perform it. They were also commanded to give one-fifth of any spoils obtained from war. They were forbidden to drink intoxicating beverages and were ordered to destroy the jars used for brewing such drinks.

A second delegation of forty men from Abdul Qays came four years later. Accompanying the delegation was Jarud bin Ala Abdi, a Christian, who embraced Islam after meeting the Prophet ﷺ.

Daman bin Tha'laba interrogates the Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet's message had spread so far that even the unlettered, uncouth dwellers in the wilderness, such as the tribe Sa'd Bin Bakr, had heard of the man called Muhammad and his message from Allâh, Lord of the worlds. Accordingly, their chief, Damam

bin Tha'laba, journeyed to Madinah to interrogate the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Damam arrived in Madinah, his long hair in two braids, and after making his camel kneel, he tethered it right at the mosque. Then he turned to the people and asked, "Who among you is the son of Abdul Muttalib?" When the people pointed out the Prophet ﷺ to him, he approached and said, "O Muhammad, I shall ask you something bluntly and you are not to be offended."

"Ask whatever you want," the Prophet ﷺ said.

"Your envoy came to me and told me that you claim to be a prophet," he said.

"He spoke the truth," the Prophet ﷺ said emphatically.

"Well, who created the sky?"

"Allâh," the Prophet replied.

"Well, who created this earth?" He asked.

"Allâh," the Prophet ﷺ replied once more.

"And who made this mountain and what it contains?"

"Allâh," the Prophet replied.

"I ask you in the name of the One Who created the sky, the earth and these mountains, has He commissioned you as His Messenger?"

"Yes," the Prophet ﷺ affirmed.

"Your envoy also tells us that it is obligatory to perform five prayers each day."

"Yes, he spoke the truth," the Prophet ﷺ said.

"I ask you in the name of the One Who commissioned you as His Messenger, has Allâh commanded this?"

"Yes," the Prophet ﷺ replied.

"Your envoy also says that we owe a charity tax on our property."

"He spoke the truth," the Prophet ﷺ replied.

"I ask you in the name of the One Who commissioned you as His Messenger, has Allâh commanded this?"

"Yes," the Prophet ﷺ said.

"Your envoy also says that fasting the month of Ramadan every year is obligatory."

"He spoke the truth," the Prophet ﷺ responded.

"I ask you in the name of the One Who commissioned you as His Messenger, has Allâh commanded this?"

"Yes," the Prophet ﷺ said.

"Your envoy says that *Hajj* is obligatory for everyone who can afford it."

"He spoke the truth," the Prophet ﷺ said.

"I ask you in the name of the One Who commissioned you as His Messenger, has Allâh commanded this?"

"Yes," the Prophet ﷺ said.

Said Damam, "I swear by the One Who sent you with righteousness, that I shall neither add to nor subtract from what you have told me!"

The Prophet ﷺ remarked to his Companions about Damam, "If he has spoken the truth, he will certainly go to Paradise."

After Damam bin Tha'laba embraced Islam in Madinah, he returned to his people and told them about his meeting with the Prophet ﷺ. All of his people became Muslim that very day, and they built mosques and began praying five times a day.

The delegations of Adhra and Bala

In Safar, 9 A.H., twelve men of the tribe Banu Adhra came to the

Prophet ﷺ. They mentioned their tribe's affiliation with Qusayy, the founder of the Prophet's clan, and how they had helped him oust Banu Bakr and Banu Khuzaa from Makkah.

They embraced Islam, and the Prophet ﷺ forbade them from preserving any of their polytheistic traditions, such as approaching soothsayers and slaughtering animals at pagan temples.

A delegation from Bala also came to the Prophet ﷺ in the same year. They also embraced Islam and returned home after three days.

The delegation of Banu Asad bin Khuzaymah

In the beginning of 9 A.H., a delegation of three people from the Banu Asad bin Khuzaymah visited the Prophet ﷺ. When they arrived, they found the Prophet ﷺ sitting in the mosque along with some of his Companions. After they had all greeted the Prophet ﷺ, their spokesman said:

> "O Prophet: we bear witness that Allâh is One and that He has no associates or equals, and that you are His slave and Messenger. O Prophet, we embraced Islam without your having to send an envoy to us. We did not fight against you like so many other tribes. We are messengers of peace for the people following us."

In reply to the claims made by Banu Asad bin Khuzaymah, Allâh revealed the following verse to His Prophet:

﴿يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُل لَّا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ﴾ [الحجرات: ١٧]

> "They believe that they have done you a great favor, O Muhammad, because they have embraced Islam. Say to them: You have done me no favor by becoming Muslim. Indeed, Allâh has conferred upon you a great blessing by guiding you and giving you faith." (49:17)

Later, the delegation asked about fortune-telling, soothsaying,

and divining omens from birds—all of which the Prophet ﷺ informed them were forbidden. When asked about interpreting omens, the Prophet said, "There was a prophet who could do this. If anyone has knowledge equal to that prophet ﷺ, then he may do it." In other words, any attempt to predict the future was forbidden in Islam. The delegation stayed in Madinah for a short time and continued to learn the fundamentals of Islam.

The delegation of Tujib

Among the delegations that came was one from Tujib, a branch of the Kinda tribe. They were Muslims, and brought with them money left over from paying *Zakaah* so that it could be distributed to other needy Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ expressed happiness at seeing them and held them in high esteem.

Abu Bakr ﷺ looked at the delegation admiringly and said, "No such Arab delegation has ever come to us."

The Prophet ﷺ remarked:

«إِنَّ الهُدَى بِيَدِ اللهِ، فَمَنْ أَرَادَ بِهِ خَيْرًا شَرَحَ صَدْرَهُ لِلإِيْمَانِ».

> "Guidance lies in Allâh's hands. When He ordains good for someone, He simply opens that person's heart and fills it with faith."

The people from Tujib showed great eagerness to learn more about Islam. They applied themselves to memorizing the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah* (the Prophet's sayings, teachings and practices). Eventually, the time of their departure approached, and the Prophet ﷺ gave them many farewell gifts. Then he asked if anyone among them had been overlooked. They replied that they had left a boy in the camp, and he was the youngest amongst them. "Send him too," the Prophet ﷺ said.

When the boy came to the Prophet, he said: "O Prophet, I belong to the same tribe which visited you a short while ago, and you gave them all they needed. Now I ask you to give me what I need."

"What is it that you need?" the Prophet ﷺ asked.

"Pray that Allâh forgives me, shows me mercy, and puts riches in my heart." The Prophet ﷺ prayed to Allâh for the young boy, who thus left Madinah more contented than all his tribesmen. Later, during the period of apostasy when many Muslims reverted to paganism, the boy not only remained firm in his faith, but exhorted his people to remain good Muslims.

The delegation of Banu Fazara

A delegation of more than twenty people from Banu Fazara visited the Prophet ﷺ after his return from Tabuk. They were Muslims, desperate for the Prophet's help against the terrible drought that was afflicting their region.

"Pray to Allâh to send rain to our villages," they said to the Prophet ﷺ. "You intercede with your Lord for us, and may your Lord intercede with you for us."

"Praise be to Allâh!" the Prophet ﷺ said. "Woe to you! What are you saying? Yes, I shall intercede with Allâh, but who is there with whom our Lord should intercede? There is no god other than Allâh: He is Great and Exalted. His footstool encompasses the heavens and the earth, and they squeak under His Glory and Grandeur just as new saddles do."

Having delivered this admonition, the Prophet ﷺ ascended the pulpit and prayed to His Lord to end the suffering of the Banu Fazara, and Allâh answered the Prophet's prayer by sending heavy rains to their land.

The delegation from Najraan

In Southern Arabia lay the territory of Najraan, a large tract, which a speedy horse could traverse from one end to the other in a day. Its seventy-three settlements were protected by 120,000 Christian soldiers, and when the Prophet ﷺ wrote to the Bishop of Najraan inviting him to accept Islam, the Bishop asked his advisors what he should do. He then informed the people of

Najraan about the letter from a man claiming to be a prophet.

After consultations, it was decided that a delegation of sixty men would be sent to meet the Prophet ﷺ. When the delegation members arrived in Madinah, they donned ornate clothes that were so long that they trailed the ground. Their cloaks were silken and their fingers bedecked with gold rings.

The Prophet ﷺ saw the envoys were dressed so ostentatiously and refused to speak to them. Some of his Companions intervened and advised the Najranites to dress more humbly and to refrain from wearing gold in the Prophet's presence. They followed the advice, and the Prophet ﷺ agreed to talk with them. He invited them to embrace Islam, but they refused, saying that they were "Muslim" long before the Prophet ﷺ had begun his mission.

"There are three things," the Prophet ﷺ told the delegation from Najraan, "that keep you from finding your way to Islam—worshipping the crucifix, eating pork, and claiming that Allâh has a son."

"Who then," the delegation challenged the Prophet, "is like Jesus, a man born without a father?"

Allâh replied to their question by revealing the following verses to the Prophet ﷺ:

﴿ إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ ءَادَمَ خَلَقَهُۥ مِن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ۝ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ ٱلْمُمْتَرِينَ ۝ فَمَنْ حَآجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا۟ نَدْعُ أَبْنَآءَنَا وَأَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَنِسَآءَنَا وَنِسَآءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل لَّعْنَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ٥٩-٦١]

"The similitude of Jesus in Allâh's sight is as that of Adam: Allâh created Adam from dust, and then He said to him, "Be," and Adam came to life. This is the truth from your Lord, so do not be among those who doubt. If anyone argues with you about Jesus now that you know the truth, tell him: Come, let us gather our sons, women, and ourselves, and we will pray to

Allâh and ask Him to curse those who lie." (3:59-61)

The Prophet ﷺ recited these verses to the delegation and asked them to accept Allâh's challenge and invoke a curse upon those who were wrong about Jesus. The delegation asked for some time to consider the matter and discussed it among themselves. "If he is actually a prophet," they concluded, "and we ask Allâh to curse those who are wrong, then we will all be destroyed." Therefore, they prudently agreed to pay *Jiziyah*.

They were to pay one thousand sets of clothing in Safar and another one thousand sets in Rajab.

In return for these payments, the Prophet ﷺ guaranteed peace, security and freedom of religion in Najraan. They then requested that the Prophet send a trustworthy Muslim with them to make sure these conditions were met. The Prophet ﷺ sent Abu Ubaydah bin Jarrah with them. In the course of the journey back to Najraan, two members of the delegation accepted Islam under the influence of Abu Ubaydah.

The delegation from Tâ'if

As mentioned earlier, the Prophet ﷺ laid siege to Tâ'if after the battle of Hunayn, but he was unable to break through the gate of the city and decided to return to Madinah. Following on their heels was Urwa bin Mas'ood Thaqafi, one of the chieftains of Tâ'if. He caught up with the troops just before they reached Madinah, and after meeting with the Prophet, he entered Islam. Then he returned to Tâ'if, confident that his people would embrace Islam once he explained its message to them. After all, his people had often declared he was dearer to them than their own families. Sadly, his people turned against him at his declaration of faith and rained arrows upon him until he lay dead.

Zeal for their pagan faith had its place, but soon the people of Ta'if realized the practical implications of holding out against the rising tide of Islam. They began to consider the problems they would face from the surrounding tribes that had embraced

Islam and decided to negotiate with the Prophet. A delegation of six men headed by Abd Ya-Lail went to Madinah. It was Ramadan, 9 A.H., and when they reached Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ pitched a tent for them in a corner of the mosque so that they could hear people reciting the Qur'ân and witness how Muslims prayed.

Over several sessions of talks, the Prophet ﷺ invited the visitors to accept Islam, but it was completely alien to their way of life. Finally, they said they would become Muslim if they did not have to perform the five daily prayers. They also asked the Prophet ﷺ not to outlaw adultery, wine, and usury for them. Lastly, they insisted on keeping their chief idol, "Lat." Naturally, the Prophet rejected these conditions outright. Eventually, the delegation accepted Islam. Their only stipulation was that they would not have to destroy "Lat" with their own hands, and the Prophet agreed to this one request.

Uthman bin Abi Al-As Thaqafi was the youngest member of the delegation. He was usually left in the camp and spent this time learning Qur'ân from the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr. In his way he memorized a large part of the Qur'ân without informing the other members of the delegation. To the surprise of the others, the young Uthman was appointed chief of the group. The Prophet ﷺ nominated him to lead the others in prayer because of his knowledge and love of the faith and the Qur'ân.

The delegation returned to Tâ'if, but the members concealed their faith from their fellow tribesmen. They attempted to frighten the people by painting a terrifying portrait of the Prophet: "We met a wrathful warrior who has come to power by the sword, and the people have accepted his supremacy. He treated us very brutally and threatened to destroy us in battle if we do not ban adultery, drinking and usury."

At first, the people refused to be intimidated at the threat. Their pride bristled, and they declared their readiness to meet the

Muslims in battle to defend their false sense of honor. Later, however, the thought of being overpowered by an invading army filled them with terror, and they told their delegates to return to Madinah and accede to the Prophet's demands. The delegates then disclosed that they had already agreed to all of the Prophet's demands and had embraced Islam. The people of Banu Thaqif were relieved at the news, and they all became Muslim.

The Prophet ﷺ sent Khalid bin Waleed, Mugheera bin Shu'ba Thaqafi, and some other people from Tâ'if to demolish the idol of "Lat." With this literal and symbolic destruction of idolatry, Tâ'if finally became part of the Islamic state.

The delegation of Banu Amir bin Sa'sa'a

The delegation of Banu Amir bin Sa'sa'a included Arbad bin Qays, Jabbar bin Aslam, and Amir bin Tufayl. Amir, it must be remembered, was the leader of the massacre of some of the Prophet's Companions at Bir Ma'una. He and Arbad came with the intention to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ if the opportunity arose.

When the group came to Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ invited them to accept Islam. Amir, as leader of the delegation, said, "I give you the power to choose one of three options. First, you can choose to rule the people of the valley, while I rule the desert-dwellers. Second, you can name me as your successor. Third, you can refuse the first two, in which case I will march on you with one thousand horses and one thousand mares of Ghatfan."

The Prophet ﷺ declined each of the choices given him, saying Allâh alone was sufficient to guide Amir and his people.

Proceeding according to their plans to kill the Prophet, Arbad moved behind the Prophet ﷺ while Amir engaged him in talk. Arbad tried to draw his dagger only to find his hand suddenly paralyzed, unable to grip the weapon. The two plotters returned unsuccessful.

On the way back from Madinah, Amir broke journey at the home of a woman belonging to his clan, the Banu Salul. There as he lay sleeping, Allâh caused him to become very ill. "I have a tumor in my throat just like camels have," he said. "Am I to die from a camel lump and that too in the house of a woman? Bring me my horse!" His steed was brought to him, and he died even as he sat on horseback.

Amir's co-conspirator, Arbad, was struck by lightning and both he and his camel were reduced to ashes. Allâh revealed two verses referring to Arbad's punishment:

﴿ وَيُسَبِّحُ ٱلرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِۦ وَٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِۦ وَيُرْسِلُ ٱلصَّوَٰعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَن يَشَآءُ وَهُمْ يُجَـٰدِلُونَ فِى ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْمِحَالِ ﴾ [الرعد: ١٣]

> "And He hurls thunderbolts and strikes whomever He wishes. Still, they dispute about Allâh, though He is severe in punishment." (13:13)

The deaths of both Amir and Arbad were reported to the Prophet ﷺ by their fellow tribesman, Moila bin Jabal of Banu Amr . He had accompanied the two to Madinah, but unlike them he had accepted Islam at the hands of the Prophet ﷺ and presented him with his camel. At the time, Moila was twenty years old, and he lived to be one hundred years, his eloquence earning him the title, "the one with two tongues."

The delegation of Banu Haneefa

The Banu Haneefa also visited the Prophet ﷺ in 9. A.H. Seventeen of their people, including the infamous Musaylima the Liar, came to Madinah and embraced Islam in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ. Some sources indicate that Musaylima accepted Islam along with the other members of the delegation. Other sources, however, assert that he stayed behind at the camp and did not become Muslim. He is also reported to have said that he would embrace Islam only if the Prophet ﷺ made him his successor.

Before the arrival of this delegation, the Prophet ﷺ had a vision that a treasure had been brought to him. From this treasure, two gold bangles were placed on his wrists, and they proved to be very painful for him. He was told to blow on the two bangles, and when he did so, the bangles fell off. The Prophet ﷺ interpreted the dream for his Companions: the bangles represented two false prophets that would appear after him.

The Prophet ﷺ was walking with his Companion, Thabit bin Qays, when he met the first false prophet, Musaylima the Liar. Musaylima was with his comrades, and he said to the Prophet ﷺ insolently, "If you like, I will let you remain the head of state; however, I will be your successor."

The Prophet ﷺ showed him the small date branch he had in his hand and said, "I shall not give you even this date. You cannot escape Allâh's decree, and if you turn your back, Allâh will destroy you. By Allâh, you are the one whom I saw in a vision. This is Thabit bin Qays, and he will reply to you on my behalf."

Upon the return of the delegation, Musaylima kept a low profile. After some time, however, he began claiming that the Prophet ﷺ had agreed to share his mission with him. Claiming to be a prophet who also received revelations, he made wine and adultery lawful for his people. His people went through a great trial of faith, and several of them succumbed to his false doctrines, although the Prophet was still alive. In the midst of Musaylima's so-called mission, the Prophet ﷺ died, and it was left to his successor, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, to punish Musaylima. Abu Bakr sent a detachment under Khalid bin Waleed رضي الله عنه to kill Musaylima and his men. After a fierce battle, the impostor was killed by Wahshi bin Harb, who in his pagan days had earned infamy by killing Hamzah bin Abdul Muttalib. By Allâh's grace, the same Wahshi earned the honor of eliminating Musaylima, the false prophet.

The kings of Hamir send an envoy

After the Prophet ﷺ returned from Tabuk, Malik bin Murrah called upon him carrying letters from the kings of Hamir: Harith bin Abd Kalal, Naeem bin Abd Kalal and Nu'man. He also bore letters from the heads of Hamdaan. The rulers wrote to the Prophet ﷺ to inform him that they all had embraced Islam. In reply, the Prophet ﷺ sent a letter to them explaining their rights and duties, and defined their responsibilities under the covenants they had entered.

Then the Prophet ﷺ sent Mu'adh bin Jabal ؓ and others back with the delegation to act as judges and military commanders in upper Yemen. They were also responsible for overseeing the collection of charity and *Zakaah*, as well as leading prayers.

Abu Musa Ash'ari was sent to the Yemeni coast, while Ma'ab Zama was sent inland. The Prophet ﷺ instructed both of them to make things easy for the people and not to create unnecessary hardship. He also advised them to spread the good news of Islam and to help everyone live in harmony. Mu'adh remained in Yemen till the death of the Prophet ﷺ, while Abu Musa returned to visit the Prophet ﷺ during the Farewell *Hajj*.

The delegation of Hamdaan

Among the delegation from Hamdaan that visited the Prophet was the great poet, Malik bin Namt, who extolled the Prophet ﷺ in verses such as the following:

> I swear by the Lord of the ladies circling Mina and those returning with the caravans from the heights of Qardad, that we have accepted the truthfulness of the Prophet. He is a Messenger guided by the Lord of the Throne above. No camel ever had in her saddle a man as strong as Muhammad against his enemy.

Initially, Malik bin Namt was sent back to his homeland to help those of his clan who embraced Islam, but later the Prophet ﷺ sent Khalid bin Waleed to invite all the people of Hamdaan to

embrace Islam. Six months went by as Khalid tried in vain to spread Islam. Then the Prophet ﷺ sent Ali bin Abi Talib and recalled Khalid. Ali read out the letter from the Prophet ﷺ inviting the people of Hamdaan to accept Islam, and they all complied. On receiving the good news, the Prophet ﷺ prostrated in praise of Allâh, and then raising his head, he said: "Peace be upon Hamdaan! Peace be upon Hamdaan!"

The delegation of Banu Abdul Madan

In Rabi' Al-Awwal, 10 A.H., the Prophet ﷺ sent Khalid bin Waleed to Banu Abdul Madan. They lived in Najraan in Yemen. Khalid was instructed to invite them to accept Islam for three days, and if they refused, he was allowed to use force to make them subjects of the Islamic state. When Khalid arrived, he sent his men in all directions to invite the people of the region to accept Islam. "O people!" the Muslims cried. "Accept Islam and you will have peace."

The people readily accepted Islam, and Khalid and his men set about teaching the people of Banu Abdul Madan the basics of the faith. Khalid then sent a message to the Prophet ﷺ informing him of his success, and the Prophet ﷺ responded by asking Khalid to escort a delegation from the region to Madinah. The delegation arrived in Madinah and met the Prophet ﷺ, who asked them several questions.

"During the Days of Ignorance, how did you subdue those who fought against you?"

"We remained united," the delegation replied, "and we never oppressed anyone."

"You speak the truth," the Prophet said.

Then the Prophet ﷺ appointed Qays bin Hisn as the governor of Banu Abdul Madan. The delegation left Madinah in the last of Shawwal or in the beginning of Dhul Qa'dah. Ever concerned that Muslims living far from Madinah would revert to the

ignorance of paganism, the Prophet ﷺ also sent Amr bin Hazm to teach them more about Islam.

Banu Mazhaj accept Islam

In Ramadan, 10 A. H., the Prophet ﷺ sent Ali bin Abi Talib ﷺ to the Banu Mazhaj in Yemen to call them to Islam. Ali was not to fight them unless they attacked first.

Ali's call to the people of Banu Mazhaj toward Islam was received with hostility. They shot arrows at Ali and his men, but the Muslims were undeterred and counter attacked. After Ali had shown the Banu Mazhaj that they were no match for the Muslim warriors, he called off the attack and once again extended an invitation to embrace Islam. This time the Banu Mazhaj accepted the offer and became Muslim.

After the chieftains and notables of the tribes came forward and took the oath of allegiance, they gave Ali a charity offering for the poor and weak, saying, "Take from this the right of Allâh." Ali and his men returned north and met the Prophet ﷺ in Makkah during the Farewell *Hajj*.

The delegation of Azd Shanwah

The Azd Shanwah, a famous tribe of southern Arabia, sent a delegation headed by Sard bin Abdullah Azdi, and they all embraced Islam. The Prophet ﷺ appointed Sard as their chief and ordered the Muslims among them to fight the polytheists in southern Arabia.

Dhul Khalasa is destroyed

The Prophet ﷺ continued to receive delegations and individuals. Jareer bin Abdullah Bajli was one such individual who called upon the Prophet ﷺ and later became one of his most renowned Companions. His tribe, the Bajela and Khash'am, had a large temple called Dhul Khalasa, which its pagan devotees put on par with the *Ka'bah*. They called Dhul Khalasa the "*Ka'bah*

Yamaniya," and referred to the *Ka'bah* as the "*Ka'bah Shamiya*."

One day the Prophet ﷺ said to Jareer, "Will you not give me peace from Dhul Khalasa?" Understanding that the Prophet ﷺ wanted him to destroy the pagan temple, Jareer told the Prophet ﷺ that he was not a good horseman. At this the Prophet struck Jareer's chest and said, "O Allâh, keep Jareer firm on his horse. Guide him and let him guide others."

Accompanied by 150 horsemen from his clan, the Ahmas, Jareer attacked the temple and burned it down. When the Prophet ﷺ heard the news, he invoked Allâh's blessings five times for the people and horses of the Ahmas.

The rise and fall of Aswad Ansi

Islam continued to spread throughout Yemen in southern Arabia, and soon the Prophet's administrators controlled the entire region. Suddenly, the second false prophet whom the Prophet ﷺ had seen in his vision arose from the city of Kahf Hannan. His name was Aswad Ansi, and backed by seven hundred warriors, he claimed to be a prophet and ruler.

Aswad captured the city of San'a, and he quickly gained power and territory. The situation became so difficult for the Muslim administrators that they found themselves confined to the territory of Ash'arain.

For three or four months these distressing circumstances persisted until Firoz Delmi, a Muslim from Persia, and his men moved against Aswad and his army. Firoz killed the false prophet, cut off his head and threw it outside the citadel. The sight of their leader's severed head shattered the resistance of Aswad's soldiers, and they fled. When peace was restored, the Muslim administrators wrote to the Prophet ﷺ and resumed their duties.

Aswad Ansi was killed exactly one day before the Prophet ﷺ himself died. The Prophet, however, had already been informed by revelation that Aswad would be killed, and he announced the

news accordingly. The letter bearing the good news was later received by Abu Bakr Siddeeq ﷺ.

Hajjatul-Wada‘: The Farewell Pilgrimage

By the year 10 A.H., Islam had spread over the entire Arabian peninsula. A great number of people capable of carrying the message of Islam worldwide arose in the coming years. It was at this point that Allâh chose to show His Prophet the fruits of his mission by calling him to make a farewell pilgrimage to Makkah.

The Prophet ﷺ announced that he would perform *Hajj*, and a large number of people flocked to Madinah to accompany him. On Saturday, Dhul Qa‘dah 26, the Prophet ﷺ left Madinah after praying the noon prayer and a few hours later he reached Dhul Hulayfah, where he prayed the afternoon prayer and spent the night. The next morning, the Prophet ﷺ said, "Last night a messenger from my Lord came to me and said, 'Perform prayer in this blessed valley and tell the people that *Umrah* can be performed during *Hajj*.'" This was in reference to the common belief that *Umrah* could not be performed during the time of *Hajj*.

Then the Prophet ﷺ bathed before the noon prayer, and applied musk on his head and body. After the prayer, he put on his *Ihraam* and then raised his voice and began the pilgrim's chant:

> "I answer Your call, O Allâh, I answer Your call. I answer Your call, You Who have no partner, I answer Your call. Verily, all praise, grace, and dominion belong to You, You Who have no partner."

A week later the Prophet reached Makkah. After praying the dawn prayer, he entered the Sacred Mosque. It was Sunday morning, Dhul Hijjah 4.

The Prophet ﷺ then circumambulated the *Ka'bah*, and performed seven circuits between Mount Safa and Marwa. When he finished, he remained in *Ihraam*, which meant he was still in the

consecrated state of pilgrimage. He asked all the pilgrims who had brought sacrificial animals along with them to remain in *ihraam* also. Others were allowed to shave their heads.

Then on Dhul Hijjah 8, the Prophet ﷺ went to Mina, where those who had shaved their heads assumed *Ihraam* again. In Mina the Prophet performed the noon, afternoon, sunset, evening, and dawn prayers. He left Mina after sunrise for Arafat. A tent was set up for him in the valley of Namirah. As the sun was setting, he mounted his camel and rode into the valley of Arafat. Pilgrims began gathering around him and waited to hear what was to be one of his most important speeches. He began by glorifying Allâh, testifying that Allâh was the One God, and that he, Muhammad, was His Prophet and Messenger.

«أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! اسْمَعُوا قَوْلِي. فَإِنِّي لاَ أَدْرِي لَعَلِّي لاَ أَلْقَاكُمْ بَعْدَ عَامِي هَذَا بِهَذَا المَوْقِفَ أَبَدًا، إِنَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَعْرَاضَكُمْ حَرَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي شَهْرِكُمْ هَذَا، فِي بَلَدِكُمْ هَذَا، أَلاَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ أُمُورِ الجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعٌ تَحْتَ قَدَمَيَّ، وَدِمَاءُ الجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوْضُوعَةٌ، وَإِنَّ أَوَّلَ دَمٍ أَضَعُ مِنْ دِمَائِنَا دَمُ ابْنِ رَبِيْعَةَ بنِ الحَارِثِ [وَكَانَ مُسْتَرْضِعًا فِي بَنِي سَعْدٍ فَقَتَلَتْهُ هُذَيْلٌ] وَرِبَا الجَاهِلِيَّةِ مَوضُوعٌ، وَأَوَّلُ رِبًا أَضَعُ مِنْ رِبَانَا رَبَا العَبَّاسِ بْنِ عَبْدِالمُطَّلِبِ، فَإِنَّهُ مَوضُوعٌ كُلُّهُ، وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ فِي النِّسَاءِ، فَإِنكُمْ أَخَذْتُمُوهُنَّ بِأَمَانَةِ اللهِ، وَاسْتَحْلَلْتُمْ فُرُوجَهُنَّ بِكَلِمَةِ اللهِ، وَلَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ أَنْ لاَ يُوطِئْنَ فُرُشَكُمْ أَحَدًا تَكْرَهُونهُ، فَإِنْ فَعَلْنَ ذَلِكَ فَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ضَرْبًا غَيْرَ مُبَرِّحٍ، وَلَهُنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهنَّ بِالمَعْرُوفِ، وَقَدْ تَرَكْتُ فِيْكُمْ مَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدَهُ إِنِ اعْتَصَمْتُمْ بِهِ: كَتَاب اللهِ. وَأَنْتمُ تسأَلُونَ عَنِّي فَمَا أَنْتمُ قَائِلُونَ؟

"O people listen: I know not whether I shall meet you here again after this year. Your blood, your property and your honor are as sacred as this day, this month and this city. Behold! I declare that all pagan customs and everything

> from the Days of Ignorance are beneath my feet. Abolished also is the practice of spilling blood for revenge. The first case of blood revenge that I abolish is that of the son of Rabi‘a bin Al-Harith, who was nursed by the Banu Sa‘d and killed by Banu Hudhayl. Moreover, the usury of the Days of Ignorance is abolished, and the first practice of usury I abolish is that of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib. Now all usury is abolished. Fear Allâh regarding women! You have taken them as a trust from Allâh, and intercourse with them has been made permissible by the words of Allâh. You have rights over them—one of which is that they must not allow someone you dislike into your home. If they do so, you are within your rights to chastise them, but not severely. It is their right over you that you should feed and clothe them in a fitting manner. I leave behind something. If you hold fast to it, you will never go astray—and that is the Book of Allâh. Now, if you are asked about me on the Day of Judgment, how will you respond? ”
>
> The Prophet’s Companions replied, “We will testify that you have conveyed the message and fulfilled your mission.”

The Prophet ﷺ raised his index finger towards the sky and then pointed toward the people, “O Allâh, be witness! O Allâh, be witness! O Allâh, be witness!”

After the Prophet ﷺ had finished addressing the people, he received a revelation from Allâh:

﴿ ٱلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِى وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمَ دِينًا ﴾

[المائدة: ٣]

> “Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favor upon you, and I have chosen Islam as your religion.” (5:3)

After the Prophet ﷺ ended his address, Bilal made the prayer call (*Adhân*) and the final prayer call (*Iqâmah*), and the Prophet ﷺ led

the people in the shortened noon prayer. Following that, Bilal called another *Iqâmah*, and the Prophet ﷺ led the people in the shortened afternoon prayer. Thus, the Prophet ﷺ demonstrated how travelers should combine and shorten prayers.

After sunset, the Prophet ﷺ left for Muzdalifa and combined the sunset and evening prayers. He did not shorten the sunset prayer, but he did shorten the evening prayer. Furthermore, when the Prophet ﷺ combined the noon and afternoon prayers as well as the sunset and evening prayers, he did not perform any additional voluntary prayers (*Sunnah* prayers) between them. Then he rested until dawn. Once he had performed the dawn prayer, he returned to Makkah to the Sacred Mosque. He faced the *Qiblah* and repeated the *Takbeer* (*Allâhu Akbar* / Allâh is Most Great), the *Tahleel* (*La ilaaha illallâh* / There is no deity except Allâh) and *Tawheed* (the testimony of the Oneness of Allâh) until light began to appear in the horizon.

Before sunrise, the Prophet ﷺ left for Mina again. He threw seven stones at the largest *Jamrah*, saying *Allâhu Akbar* with every throw. When the Prophet finished stoning the *Jamrah*, he ceased reciting the *Talbiyah* (*Labbayk Allâh humma, labbayk…*). He also told his Companions: "Learn the rites of *Hajj* from me, for perhaps I shall not be able to perform *Hajj* after this year."

The stoning being completed, the Prophet ﷺ went to his camp in Mina and slaughtered sixty-three camels. Ali slaughtered the remaining thirty-seven camels, and the Prophet ﷺ instructed that a part of each camel be cooked and served to him and his Companions.

After performing the sacrifice, the Prophet ﷺ had his head shaved, beginning with the right side of his head, and some of the hair was distributed among his Companions. Abu Talha was given the Prophet's hair from the left side of his head.

The Prophet ﷺ put on his ordinary clothes now that he was out of *Ihraam*, applied musk, and then rode his camel to the Sacred

Mosque. There he circled the *Ka'bah* seven times. After the noon prayer, he went to the people of Banu Abdul Muttalib, who were serving *Zamzam* water to the pilgrims. He said, "Banu Abdul Muttalib, continue drawing water from the well. I would join you in this task, but I fear people would try to take over your rightful duty." They gave the Prophet ﷺ some *Zamzam* water which he proceeded to drink.

The Prophet ﷺ returned to Mina and stayed there for the days of *Tashreeq* (Dhul Hijjah 11, 12 and 13). Each day he stoned all three *Jamarahs* after sunset, starting with the smallest one, *Jamrah Al-Sughrah*, and then proceeding to the middle and large ones.

The Prophet delivered two more addresses, on the 10th and 12th of Dhul Hijjah, stressing the same points he had made in his sermon on the plain of Arafat. It was during the days of *Tashreeq* before his last address that he received *Surah Al-Nasr*.

On Tuesday, Dhul Hijjah 13, the Prophet ﷺ left Mina after stoning all three *Jamrahs*. He performed the noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening prayers at Abtah. He also sent Aishah along with her brother, Abdul Rahman bin Abi Bakr, to perform *Umrah*. When Aishah returned, the Prophet ﷺ went to the *Ka'bah* and performed the farewell circumambulation. After performing the dawn prayer, he left Makkah to begin the journey back to Madinah.

As he approached the city of Madinah, and its landmarks grew visible, the Prophet ﷺ called out "*Allâhu Akbar*" thrice and said:

«لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَ شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ المُلْكُ وَلَهُ الحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ، آيِبُونَ تَائِبُونَ، عَابِدُونَ، سَاجِدُونَ، لِرَبِّنَا حَامِدُونَ، صَدَقَ اللهُ وَعْدَهُ، وَنَصَرَ عَبْدَهُ وَهَزَمَ الأَحْزَابَ وَحْدَهُ».

"Nothing is to be worshipped except Allâh. He is the One. He has no associate. Dominion and all praise are His, and

He has power over all things. We are returning, repenting, worshipping, praising and bowing before our Lord. Allâh has proved that His promise is true, and He has helped His slaves. Victory is His alone."

Expedition to Palestine

The Prophet ﷺ returned to Madinah, aware that he was near the end of his mission, and he spent most of his time praising and glorifying Allâh who had given him success after success during his twenty-three years of prophethood. People were entering Islam in multitudes, and delegations continued to arrive before him.

In Rabi' Al-Awwal of 11 A.H., the Prophet ﷺ sent Usama bin Zayd رضي الله عنه with seven hundred soldiers to the territory of Balqa and Darum in Palestine. They were to stage a show of might against the Romans, who had resumed their hostile acts. The army set out and at Jarf, only three miles outside of Madinah, they received news that the Prophet ﷺ was very ill. They encamped there awaiting further news of the Prophet's health. With the Prophet's subsequent death, Usama and his men went on with their expedition and became the first people to lead a military expedition during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr Siddeeq رضي الله عنه.

Signs of the Prophet's imminent death

The episode of the poisoned meat served to the Prophet had almost receded in the memories of people when he began showing signs of poisoning. The poison gradually took root in his system and the Prophet's health deteriorated. Since the tenth year of the *Hijrah* he began to express through his words and his actions that he expected to pass away soon.

Each Ramadan the Prophet ﷺ would perform *I'tikâf* (continuous prayer and worship in a mosque) during the last ten days of the month. In Ramadan of 10 A.H., however, he performed *I'tikâf* for the last twenty days of the month, saying that during this time,

Jibreel asked him to recite the Qur'ân twice rather than once.

The Prophet ﷺ told his daughter, Fatimah رضى الله عنـــها, that he thought his time was at hand. Also, while bidding farewell to Mu'adh, who was traveling to Yemen, he said, "O Mu'adh, after this you may not see me again, and you will soon pass by this mosque of mine and my grave." Mu'adh began to weep at these words.

Even during the Farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet ﷺ said more than once: "I shall not be able to meet you after this year. Perhaps I will not be able to perform *Hajj* again." Similarly, the revelation that the Prophet ﷺ received during the Farewell pilgrimage also indicated that the Prophet's mission was complete:

﴿ ٱلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِى وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمَ دِينًا ﴾

[المائدة: ٣]

> "Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favor upon you, and I have chosen Islam as your religion." (5:3)

Furthermore, he termed the pilgrimage *Hajjatul-Wada'* (the Farewell pilgrimage), to indicate that he was bidding farewell to his followers before he passed away.

In the beginning of Safar, 11 A.H., the Prophet ﷺ went to Mount Uhud and prayed for the martyrs buried there as if he were bidding farewell to them. On his return he mounted the pulpit and said:

> "I will precede you, and I shall bear witness for you also. By Allâh, I see before me now *Haudh Al-Kauthar* [the well of Kauthar in heaven]. I have been given the keys to the treasures of the earth. I do not fear that you will revert to polytheism after I am gone, but I fear you will be consumed by the love of the world and vie against each other for worldly things."

Late one night before the end of Safar, the Prophet ﷺ went to the cemetery in Madinah, known as Baqi Gharqad, and prayed for the dead there. "I shall meet you soon, God-willing," he said.

The Prophet ﷺ falls ill

On the last Monday of Safar, the Prophet ﷺ attended a funeral at Baqi. When he returned, 'Aishah told him that she had a headache. "Nay, it is I who have a headache," the Prophet ﷺ said, "O, 'Aishah, my head."

Although the Prophet's illness worsened, he still gave each of his wives his time by staying with a different wife each day. When he was with his wife Maymoona, he asked her whom he was to stay with the next day. Knowing that he wanted to be with 'Aishah, his other wives waived their rights in favor of 'Aishah. Supported on both sides by Fadl bin Abbas and Ali bin Abi Talib رضي الله عنهم, the Prophet went to 'Aishah رضى الله عنها.

Covenant and counseling

'Aishah relates that the Prophet's illness increased at her house. He said, "Pour seven unopened small water-skins on me so that I can make a bequest to the people." The Prophet ﷺ sat in a tub belonging to Hafsah رضى الله عنها, and 'Aishah poured water over his head until he motioned for her to stop. Then he went out and led the people in prayer. He addressed them, saying:

«إِنَّ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانُوا يَتَّخِذُونَ قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ وَصَالِحِيْهِم مَسَاجِدَ، أَلاَ فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا القُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ، إِنِّي أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ». وَقَالَ: «لَعْنَةُ اللهِ عَلَى اليَهُودِ وَالنَّصَارَى اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ». وَقَالَ: «لاَ تَتَّخِذُوا قَبْرِي وَثَنًا يُعْبَدُ».

"Your predecessors made the graves of their Prophets and ancestors into places of worship. I forbid you to do this.

> May Allâh curse the Jews and Christians for turning their prophets' graves into places of worship. You must not turn my grave into an idol to be worshipped."

The Prophet ﷺ asked that anyone whom he owed anything should come forward, for he did not want to meet his Lord without first being forgiven by those he had wronged, or without having repaid his debts.

The Prophet ﷺ then turned toward his followers and related:

> "Allâh gave one of His slaves a choice between the treasures of this world and that which lies with Allâh. The slave chose that which is with Allâh."

Abu Saeed Khudri رضي الله عنه reports:

> When Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه heard this, he burst into tears and said, "May I be sacrificed for your sake along with my mother and father." We were amazed by his behavior. "Look at Abu Bakr," we said to each other. "The Prophet ﷺ told us about a slave of Allâh who chose the next world when given a choice between this world and the hereafter. Now why is Abu Bakr reacting like this?" After a few days, however, we understood that the slave the Prophet had referred to was himself. We then realized that Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه was superior to us in knowledge.

The Prophet's regard for Abu Bakr ﷺ increased with this incident. He then asked for all doors opening into the Mosque to be closed, except for the door of Abu Bakr's house.

The next day, Thursday, the Prophet's illness intensified and he said, "Let me write something for you so that you will never go astray."

Umar رضي الله عنه, however, protested, "The Prophet ﷺ is in great pain. We have the Qur'ân, and this is enough for us." This led to a dispute among the Companions at the Prophet's bedside, and he said to them: "Sit down."

That same day, the Prophet ordered that all Jews, Christians and polytheists be turned out from the Arabian peninsula. He also stressed that delegations to Madinah were to be received with honor exactly as he used to receive them. He stressed the importance of prayer and the just treatment of slaves and servants. In closing he said:

«تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ أَمْرَيْنِ لَنْ تَضِلُّوا مَا تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا: كِتَابَ اللهِ وَسُنَّتِي».

> "I leave with you two things. As long as you hold them tightly, you will never go astray: they are the Book of Allâh and my *Sunnah*."

Abu Bakr ﷺ leads Prayer

In spite of the severity of the Prophet's ﷺ illness, he continued to lead prayers. However, that Thursday, when it was time for the evening prayer, the Prophet ﷺ took a bath to assuage his pain. When he tried to get up, though, he lost consciousness. When he came to, he bathed again, but fell unconscious when he was about to get up. He bathed a third time, and a third time he blacked out when he tried to get up. He then sent word to Abu Bakr ﷺ to lead the prayer. Abu Bakr ﷺled seventeen prayers because of the Prophet's deteriorating health.

Between Saturday and Sunday, the Prophet ﷺ felt a little relief. Two people supported him and took him to the Mosque to perform the noon prayer. At that time, Abu Bakr ﷺ was leading the prayer. The Prophet sat on his left, and Abu Bakr ﷺ followed the Prophet in prayer while the others followed him ﷺ.

All for charity

On Sunday, the Prophet ﷺ set his slaves free, gave away his last seven dinars in charity, and bequeathed his weapons to the Muslim army. When night drew near, Aishah رضى الله عنها sent her lamp to a woman in the neighborhood to drop a little tallow in it. The Prophet's ﷺ coat of mail had been pawned with a Jew for about seventy-five kilograms of barley.

The Prophet's death draws near

On Monday morning, Abu Bakr ﷺ was leading prayer when the Prophet ﷺ lifted the curtain of Aishah's رضى الله عنها house, which adjoined the Mosque, and looked at the people in prayer. He smiled, and Abu Bakr ﷺ moved backwards a little thinking that the Prophet ﷺ wanted to come and lead the prayer.

The people, when they saw the radiance of the Prophet's face, were overtaken by such happiness that they almost interrupted their prayers. The Prophet ﷺ, however, motioned with his hand indicating that they should complete the prayer. He disappeared behind the curtain.

Later that day (other sources indicate it was later that week), the Prophet ﷺ called his daughter, Fatimah رضى الله عنها. He whispered something to her, and she burst into tears. He then whispered to her again, at which she smiled. Aishah رضى الله عنها asked Fatimah what the Prophet ﷺ had told her, but she said he had asked her to keep it a secret. After the Prophet's death, Fatimah revealed that her father had first told her he would not recover from his illness, and this had made her cry. Then he told her that of his children, she would be the next to join him, which had made her smile. He also informed her that she would be made the *Sayyidah* (leader) of the women of Paradise.

Fatimah was so distressed at her father's agony, she cried: "O the pains of my dear father!" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "After this day, your father will suffer no pain."

The Prophet ﷺ then called Fatimah's sons, Hasan and Husayn رضى الله عنهما, and kissed them. His wives were nearby, and he counseled them. His pain was gradually increasing, and he put a sheet over his face and would uncover it only when he was out of breath. He would say, "May the curse of Allâh be upon the Jews and Christians!" He repeated his earlier instruction that no two religions were to flourish in Arabia. Finally, he repeated over and over again: "Prayer, prayer … your slaves and subordinates."

The Prophet ﷺ dies

The Prophet's strength began to ebb, and Aishah رضى الله عنها held the Prophet against her between her breast and throat. Just at that moment, her brother Abdul Rahman bin Abi Bakr entered the room, holding a root (*Miswaak*) used to clean teeth. Aishah saw the Prophet ﷺ looking at the *Miswaak*, so she asked him if he wanted it, and he nodded. She took it, and after chewing the end a little to soften it, she gave it to him.

A bowl of water was kept near the Prophet ﷺ, and he dipped both his hands into it and wiped his face, saying, "There is no god but Allâh. Verily, these are the pangs of death."

He either lifted up his hands or pointed his forefinger toward heaven. His voice was weak, but 'Aishah could hear him speak as he raised his eyes and repeated three times:

«مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَارْحَمْنِي وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالرَّفِيقِ الأَعْلَى، اللَّهُمَّ الرَّفِيقَ الأَعْلَى»

HADEETH

"With the blessed from among the prophets, the ever-truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous! O Allâh, forgive me and have mercy on me. I choose to be with the exalted companions! O Allâh, the exalted companions!"

Abu Bakr unites the Mourners

As the news of the Prophet's failing health spread among the Prophet's Companions, their world darkened, and they were on the verge of losing their senses. No day had been brighter than the day the Prophet ﷺ came to Madinah, and no day was darker than the twelfth of Rabi' Al-Awwal, 11 A.H., the day he died.

Meanwhile, Umar رضي الله عنه was in the Prophet's Mosque telling the people that the Prophet ﷺ would not leave this world until Allâh had destroyed the Hypocrites. He threatened to kill anyone who

claimed the Prophet ﷺ was dead.

That Monday morning, Abu Bakr ؓ noticed that the Prophet's ﷺ health seemed to be improving, and he returned home, optimistic that the Prophet ﷺ would soon recover. When he reached home, however, he heard that the Prophet had passed away. He mounted his horse and galloped back to the Prophet's Mosque. He entered without saying a word to anyone and walked into the Prophet's house, where the Prophet ﷺ lay, a Yemenite sheet covering his body. Abu Bakr uncovered the Prophet's face, kissed him and wept. "May my mother and father be your ransom," Abu Bakr said. "You have tasted the death that Allâh has decreed for you. There is no death after this one."

Conscious that the people needed to be addressed, Abu Bakr went into the Prophet's Mosque where Umar stood fiercely denying the news of the Prophet's death. Abu Bakr asked Umar to sit down, but he refused. Abu Bakr ؓ then went to the Prophet's pulpit and praised Allâh. He looked at the anxious faces before him and addressed them thus:

مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يَعْبُدُ مُحَمَّدًا فَإِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا قَدْ مَاتَ، وَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يَعْبُدُ اللهَ فَإِنَّ اللهَ حَيٌّ لاَ يَمُوتُ، قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى:

> "O men, if anyone worships Muhammad, let him know that Muhammad is dead. But if anyone worships Allâh, then know that Allâh is alive and will never die. Allâh says in the Qur'ân:
>
> ﴿وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِن قَبْلِهِ ٱلرُّسُلُ ۚ أَفَإِيْن مَّاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ ٱنقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰٓ أَعْقَـٰبِكُمْ ۚ وَمَن يَنقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ فَلَن يَضُرَّ ٱللَّهَ شَيْـًٔا ۗ وَسَيَجْزِى ٱللَّهُ ٱلشَّـٰكِرِينَ﴾[آل عمران: ١٤٤]
>
> 'Muhammad is but a messenger, and many other messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you return to disbelief? Truly, those who abandon belief do not hurt Allâh. Indeed, Allâh rewards those who are grateful.'" (3:144)

No one had ever reflected on the significance of the verse Abu Bakr recited during his address. It was inconceivable to most of the Companions that the Prophet ﷺ would pass away before they

did. Abbas ﷺ relates; when Abu Bakr read this verse to us, it was as if Allâh had never revealed it until that moment.

Umar was especially devastated by the news. Later, he was to describe his reaction in the following words:

> "By Allâh, when I heard Abu Bakr reciting the verse, I was taken aback and fell down as if I did not have any legs. It was at that moment that I comprehended that the Prophet had died."

Abu Bakr ﷺ chosen as *Khalifah*

The most significant dispute that arose immediately after the death of the Prophet ﷺ was that of choosing the Prophet's successor. Ali bin Abi Talib ﷺ thought that he was within his rights to succeed the Prophet because he had been close to the Prophet from the beginning of his mission. Therefore, Ali, Zubayr and some people of Banu Hashim assembled in Fatimah's house, while the *Ansar* met elsewhere to choose an *Amir* (leader) from among themselves. The rest of the *Muhajireen*, including Abu Bakr, Umar ﷺ and Abu Ubayda also joined the *Ansar*. They discussed and debated the matter, unsure who would be chosen or how it should be done. The *Ansar* wanted the Prophet's successor to come from among them, but Abu Bakr made a significant observation:

> "Yes, the *Ansar* deserve this honor, but the Arabs believe the Quraysh to be unrivaled in the art of administration, and no Arab will accept a ruler who is not from the Quraysh. The Quraysh are superior to others in respect to lineage and family."

Abu Bakr ﷺ then caught the hands of Umar and Abu Ubayda and said, "I choose either of these two to be our *Amir*."

"One *Amir* from among us, and one from among you," someone from among the *Ansar* suggested. People began to raise their voices. Suddenly, Umar asked Abu Bakr to extend his hand. When he did so, Umar pledged his allegiance to him. One by one, everyone else present followed Umar's lead and pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr,

who thus became the Prophet's successor.

Funeral rites and burial

On Tuesday, the Prophet's ﷺ body was washed by Abbas, Ali, Abbas' two sons, Fadl and Qatham, and the freed slaves of the Prophet ﷺ, Shaqran, Usamah bin Zayd and Aus bin Khaula رضي الله عنهم

Abbas and his two sons moved the Prophet's body from side to side, Usama and Shaqran poured water, Ali washed the body, and Aus helped prop the body up.

The Prophet's body was washed three times with water and berry leaves. The water came from Ghars, Sa'd bin Khaythama's well in Qubaa, which the Prophet ﷺ used to drink from. His body was then shrouded in three white cotton Yemenite sheets.

Abu Talha رضي الله عنه dug the Prophet's grave on the spot where he had died in Aishah's house. It was a *Lahd* type of grave with a niche in the side. The Prophet's body lay on his cot beside the grave, and his Companions came in groups of ten to pray the funeral prayer individually, without an *Imam* to lead the prayer. First, members of the Prophet's family prayed, followed by the *Muhajireen*, the *Ansar*, and then the women and children.

The funeral prayers for the Prophet ﷺ lasted all day Tuesday and most of Wednesday. Late Wednesday night the Prophet ﷺ was buried.

Mothers of the believers

The Prophet ﷺ had either eleven or twelve wives, of whom nine were alive when he passed away. A short account of each of the Mothers of the believers is given below:

1) Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid رضى الله عنها

The Prophet ﷺ married her when he was twenty-five years old. She bore all the Prophet's children except Ibraheem, and was the Prophet's only wife while she lived. She died at the age of 65, in the month of Ramadan, ten years after the Prophet ﷺ began his mission, and was buried in Hajoon.

2) Saudah bint Zam'a رضى الله عنها

She was previously married to her cousin Sakran bin Amr. The couple embraced Islam and migrated to Abyssinia. On their return to Makkah, Sakran died. The Prophet ﷺ married Saudah in Shawwal, one month after Khadeejah died. She died in Shawwal, 54 A.H.

3) Aishah Siddeeqah bint Abu Bakr Siddeeq رضى الله عنها

The Prophet ﷺ married her in Shawwal, a year after marrying Saudah. Aishah was the only virgin the Prophet ﷺ married and was regarded as the best loved of all the Prophet's wives. She was the most learned female Muslim jurist in history. She passed away on Ramadan 17, 57 A.H., and was buried in Baqi.

4) Hafsah bint Umar bin Khattab رضى الله عنها

She was married to Khunays bin Hadhafah, who died from a wound incurred at the Battle of Badr. The Prophet ﷺ married her in Sha'ban, 3 A.H., after she came out of mourning. She died in Madinah in Sha'ban, 45 A.H., at the age of 60, and was buried in Baqi.

5) Zaynab bint Khuzaymah رضى الله عنها

She was the widow of Ubaydah bin Harith ؓ who was martyred in the Battle of Badr. According to some others she was married to Abdullah bin Jahsh ؓ, who was martyred in the battle of Uhud. The Prophet ﷺ married her in 4 A.H. In the Days of Ignorance, she was known as "*Umm Al-Masaakeen*" (Mother of the destitute) for her compassion toward the poor. She died in Rabi' Al-Akhir, 4 A.H., eight months after her marriage to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ led her funeral prayer and buried her in Baqi.

6) Umm Salamah, or Hind bint Abu Umayyah رضى الله عنها

She was married to Abu Salamah ؓ. She bore several children while married to him, but he died in Jamad Al-Akhir, 4 A.H. The Prophet ﷺ married her at the end of Shawwal, 4 A.H. She was a great jurist and one of the wisest women of her time. She died in 59 A.H. at the age of 84 (other sources date her death in 62 A.H.). She was buried in Baqi.

7) Zaynab bint Jahsh bin Riqab رضى الله عنها

She was the daughter of the Prophet's ﷺ aunt Umayma bint Abdul Muttalib. She was initially married to Zayd bin Haritha, but the couple had problems, and Zayd divorced her. Zayd had been adopted by the Prophet ﷺ, and according to ancient Arab customs, it was unlawful for a man to marry the former wife of an adopted son. Allâh ordered the Prophet ﷺ to marry Zaynab to show that this ancient Arab custom had been abolished. The marriage took place in Dhul Qa'dah, 5 A.H. (other sources date the marriage in 4 A. H.). She died in 20 A.H. at the age of 53 and was the first to die among the Prophet's surviving wives. Umar رضي الله عنه led the funeral prayer, and she was buried in Baqi.

8) Juwayriyah bint Al-Harith رضى الله عنها

She was brought as a prisoner from the battle of Banu Al-Mustaliq in Sha'ban, in the year 5 or 6 A.H. and was given to Thabit bin Qays. He decided to set her free in return for a certain amount. The Prophet ﷺ paid Thabit the amount he requested, freed her and married her. Having seen this, the Muslims set free one hundred families of the Banu Al-Mustaliq saying that they were in-laws of the Prophet ﷺ. Thus, she proved herself a blessing for her people. She died in Rabi' Al-Awwal, 56 A.H., at the age of 65.

9) Umm Habeebah, or Ramla bint Abi Sufyan رضى الله عنها

She came to be known as "Umm Habeebah" (the mother of Habeebah) because of her daughter, Habeebah. As the daughter of the Prophet's fierce enemy, Abu Sufyan bin Harb, she made many sacrifices for her faith and migrated to Abyssinia along with her husband, Ubaydullah bin Jahsh. Ubaydullah later converted to Christianity and died, but Umm Habeebah remained steadfast in faith. When the Prophet ﷺ sent his envoy, Amr bin Umayya Damri, to the king of Abyssinia, he also sent a proposal to the widowed Umm Habeebah. The king married her to the Prophet ﷺ, paying her 400 dinars in dowry, and sent her to the Prophet ﷺ under the escort of Shurahbeel bin Hasnah. After the Prophet ﷺ

returned from Khaybar, he married Umm Habeebah in Safar or Rabi' Al-Awwal, 7 A.H. She died either in 42 or 44 A.H.

10) Safiyah bint Huyayy bin Akhtab رضى الله عنها

She was the daughter of the chieftain of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir and a descendant of the Prophet Haroon (Aaron). She was taken captive in Khaybar and given to the Prophet ﷺ because of her status. The Prophet ﷺ asked her to accept Islam and she did so. He then set her free and married her in 7 A.H. on the eve of the conquest of Khaybar. Her death is variously dated around 36, 50 and 52 A.H. She too was buried in Baqi.

11) Maymoona bint Harith Hilaliya رضى الله عنها

She was the sister of Abbas' wife, Umm Al-Fadl Lababa Al-Kubra bint Harith Hilaliya. The Prophet ﷺ married her in Dhul Qa'dah, 7 A H. She came to the Prophet ﷺ as his bride at Sarf, nine miles outside Makkah. She also died at Sarf in 38, 61 or 62 A.H. and was buried there. Her grave site is known even today.

There is no question that these eleven women were married to the Prophet ﷺ. However, some scholars have disagreed over the status of Rayhana bint Zayd, some saying she became the Prophet's wife in Muharram, 6 A.H. She belonged to the Banu Nadir and was the wife of a man from the Banu Quraydha. She was captured in the battle against Banu Quraydha, and the Prophet ﷺ chose her for himself. It is also said that the Prophet did not set her free and kept her as a maid. She passed away upon the Prophet's return from his Farewell pilgrimage, and the Prophet buried her in Baqi.

The Prophet ﷺ also had a maid named Mariya Qibtiya (Mary the Copt), who was presented to him by Muqauqis. She bore the Prophet ﷺ a son named Ibraheem. She died in 15 or 16 A.H. and was buried in Baqi

The Prophet's children

All the Prophet's offspring, with the exception of Ibraheem, were

born to Khadeejah رضـــى الله عنـــها. Below is a brief account of the Prophet's children.

1) Qasim

He was the eldest son of the Prophet ﷺ, and thus the Prophet was called "Abul Qasim" (the father of Qasim). He died when he was about two years old.

2) Zaynab

She was the eldest daughter of the Prophet ﷺ. She was born after Qasim, and was married to Abul Aas bin Rabi'a, the son of her aunt Hala bint Khuwaylid. Zaynab had a son named Ali and a daughter, Umama, whom the Prophet ﷺ would place in his lap during prayer. Zaynab died in the earlier part of 8 A.H., in Madinah.

3) Ruqayyah

She was married to Uthman bin Affan ؓ and gave birth to a son, Abdullah, who died at the age of six when a rooster gouged his eye. The Prophet ﷺ was at the Battle of Badr when Ruqayyah passed away. She had already been buried when Zayd bin Haritha reached Madinah with the news of victory at Badr.

4) Umm Kulthoom

After the death of Ruqayyah, the Prophet ؓ returned from Badr and gave Umm Kulthoom to Uthman bin Affan ؓ in marriage. She had no children, and died in 9 A.H. and was buried in Baqi.

5) Fatimah

The youngest daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, she was married to Ali bin Abi Talib ؓ after the Battle of Badr. She gave birth to two sons, Hasan and Husayn, and two daughters, Zaynab and Umm Kulthoom. Fatimah رضى الله عنها died six months after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

All five of the children mentioned above were born before the Prophet ﷺ was appointed Allâh's messenger.

6) Abdullah

There is some difference of opinion about whether Abdullah was born before or after the advent of Islam. He was the last of the Prophet's sons born to Khadeejah رضى الله عنهـا and died during childhood.

7) Ibraheem

Ibraheem was born in Madinah in Jamad Al-Awwal or Jamad Al-Akhir, 9 A.H. His mother was the Prophet's maid, Mariya Qibtiya. On the day of his death, Shawwal 29, 10 A.H., a solar eclipse occurred in Madinah. The people believed that the eclipse was to commemorate Ibraheem's death, but the Prophet ﷺ informed them that astronomical events were not affected by human affairs. Ibraheem was sixteen or eighteen months old when he died, and was buried in Baqi, and the Prophet ﷺ said, "He will be nursed by one of the maids in Paradise."

The Prophet's features and character

The Prophet's ﷺ physical appearance was described in detail by his Companions.

The Prophet's face

The Prophet's face was fair, attractive and round. Whenever he was pleased, his face shone bright like the full moon, but it would turn crimson when he was angry.

If sweat appeared on his face, the beads glistened like pearls, and the fragrance of his perspiration excelled the smell of musk.

The Prophet's cheeks were soft, his forehead wide, and his eyebrows thin and arched. His eyes were wide, with black pupils, while the whites were mixed with crimson. He had long thick eyelashes.

The bridge of the Prophet's nose was high and shiny. His mouth was wide, and there were spaces between each of his teeth. His teeth were bright, appearing like tiny hailstones when he smiled,

and they sparkled as he talked.

The Prophet's beard was black, thick and full, covering most of his chest. A few gray hairs showed on his ear lobes and chin.

Head, neck and hair

The Prophet had a large head on a long neck. His hair was slightly curly, and he wore it parted in the middle. Sometimes he kept his hair so long it touched both shoulders, while at other times it fell just above or below his ear lobes. He had a few gray hair above his forehead, but there were no more than twenty gray hairs on his head and beard together.

Limbs

The Prophet ﷺ was big boned with large elbows, shoulders, knees, and wrists. His palms and feet were wide. His arms were heavy and hairy, and his heels and calves were light. He had broad hirsute shoulders, but his chest was broad and hairless, with only a line of hair running from his chest to his navel.

Build and stature

The Prophet was of a medium build, being neither fat nor thin. He had a straight body. Although he was not particularly tall, he rose above most men in height.

Fragrance

Several of the Prophet's Companions have mentioned a fragrance, sweeter than any perfume, emanating from the Prophet's body. Anas ﷺ says: "I never smelt any musk or any other such perfume that was as sweet as the fragrance of the Prophet." Jabir ﷺ says: "The Prophet's fragrance lingered after he left, and we could tell which path he had taken by sniffing the air." If the Prophet ﷺ happened to shake hands with anyone, the fragrance would remain with that person for the whole day. When he spread his hand over a child's head, others would discern his fragrance on the child. Umm Sulaym رضى الله عنها used

to collect some of the Prophet's sweat in a small bottle and would mix it with perfume.

The Prophet's gait

The Prophet ﷺ was swift-footed and had a firm step. He would rise with a jerk and walk swiftly but smoothly, as if going down a slope. He would turn swiftly and gracefully.

The Prophet ﷺ never seemed to tire when he walked, and nobody could keep pace with him. Abu Hurayrah ﷺ says, "I have never seen anyone who walked as quickly as the Prophet ﷺ. It looked as if the earth rolled itself up for him when he walked. We would tire ourselves out walking with him, while he would move on with ease."

Voice and speech

The Prophet's voice was slightly loud, his speech eloquent. He looked dignified in silence and attractive while speaking. He always spoke to the point, and his words were explicit and distinct. Quite naturally, he was a powerful orator.

Character

The Prophet ﷺ usually seemed cheerful, and he liked to smile. Even when others were rude to him, he was never harsh and rude. He never raised his voice in the market place.

If faced with a choice between two options, the Prophet ﷺ would always choose the easier one, provided that it did not lead to sin. Above everything else, he avoided sinning or anything leading to disobedience of Allâh. He never sought revenge for any offense committed against himself, but when the honor of Allâh was at stake, he would certainly punish the offender.

As we have seen over the course of the events in his life, the Prophet ﷺ was generous, brave, strong, and extraordinarily patient. Never vulgar or obscene, his dislike of something was apparent in his face. He never stared directly at anyone, nor did

he ever glare at anyone in displeasure. He never rebuked his servant, nor was he ever heard saying something unkind about anyone.

Even before his appointment as Allâh's Messenger, the Prophet ﷺ was known as "*Al-Ameen*" (the Trustworthy). He always kept his promises, and remained humble even in victory. He respected the ties of kinship, attending the funerals of his relatives and Companions. He sat with the poor and needy, and accepted invitations extended to him from slaves. At the height of his power as head of the Islamic state, he lived modestly. He never attempted to outdo others in serving rich food or wearing expensive clothing.

CONCLUSION

It is impossible to adequately describe the Prophet's life and its significance for all humanity. This book is merely a brief account of the most important and influential person in history.

I pray that Allâh blesses this small work, and forgives me for falling short of my lofty goal. And I pray that Allâh blesses the Prophet, his family, and his righteous Companions. May Allâh grant us a place under the Prophet's standard on the Day of Judgment. *Ameen*!